

From the Mountain

An anthology of the
magazine successively titled
Pseudopodia, the *North Georgia
Review*, and *South Today*

Edited, with an introduction by
Helen White *and*
Redding S. Sugg, Jr.



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Published 1936-1945 by Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling from Old Screamer Mountain near Clayton, Georgia, the magazine was part of the Southern Renaissance and an agent of social change in the region. Paula Snelling has said it served as "a sort of lonely hearts club" for isolated Southern liberals. The late Lillian Smith, in a memo to a biographer, wrote, "...we were primarily interested in the white South but we soon saw that there is no really 'white South,' it is and always has been a White and Black South, made of the furtive, secret, open, evil and good relationships of the two peoples who lived down here; made also of the secret, furtive, open, evil and good relationships of the two sexes." The editors of this anthology state in their *Introduction* that the chief distinctions of the magazine were "the durability of its literary judgements, the combination of insight and realism in its treatment of the race issue, and the quality of its regionalism."

From the Mountain



Selections from

Pseudopodia (1936),

The North Georgia Review (1937–1941),

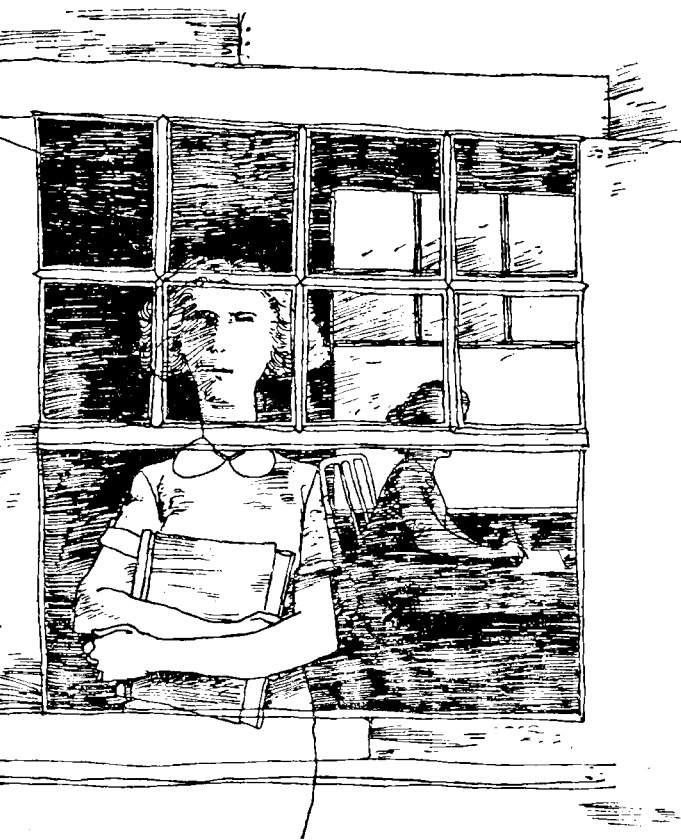
and *South Today* (1942–1945)

edited by

Lillian Smith and

Paula Snelling

FROM



THE MOUNTAIN

Edited, with an Introduction, by

Helen White *and*

Redding S. Sugg, Jr.

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Professor Glenn W. Rainey of the Department of English, Georgia Institute of Technology, has shared his recollections of the magazine, helped us trace several contributors, and given us access to his papers relating to the magazine, which he has deposited in the Robert W. Woodruff Library for Advanced Studies, Special Collections, at Emory University.

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Introduction

CONCEIVED in the winter of 1935 as an outlet for Southern writers and as a review of Southern writing, the little magazine here anthologized first appeared in the spring of 1936 and developed through the decade of its existence an inclusive concern with the qualities, the defects, and the renaissance of Southern culture. It appeared under the successive titles *Pseudopodia* (1936), *The North Georgia Review* (1937–1941), and *South Today* (1942–1945), first as a quarterly and then, beginning with the Spring-Summer number of 1944, as a semi-annual. Circulation began at 27 and ended at nearly 10,000, supplemented by the sale of reprints in pamphlet form of certain articles. Distributed by many individuals and organizations throughout the country, the reprints circulated by tens of thousands; the one most in demand, "There are Things To Do," by Lillian Smith, appeared in *South Today* for Fall-Winter 1943, and 250,000 copies of the reprint were sold. The magazine is of historical value both as a document and as an agent of the emergence of the modern South on a racially integrated basis following the New Deal administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Its editors, Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling, were, respectively, the director of the Laurel Falls Camp for girls located on Old Screamer Mountain near Clayton, Georgia, and a high school teacher of mathematics in Macon, Georgia. They had been associated for a number of years, Miss Snelling acting as a counselor at the camp in her school vacations and Miss Smith wintering in Macon. The winter of 1935, however, found them confined to Old Screamer, where Miss Smith was responsible for the care of her invalid mother and where Miss Snelling remained to recuperate from injuries received in an accident which forced her to take a leave of absence from her school. Seeking to relieve their tedium and isolation, they started the magazine. The initiative seemed merely personal; but the magazine appealed at once to

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people throughout the region and beyond who were, like the editors, aware of movement and the need for change in the South after two generations of defeated and defensive stasis.

The editors explained in their first promotional piece, a mimeographed flyer, that the magazine would "feed largely upon those tentative feelers you put out with the dream of getting them into the big magazines and which you either never quite have the courage to submit there or which are returned with what even in your more detached moments you suspect are unmerited rejection slips." But this unpromising program masked a serious motive. As they stated editorially in the first number, they meant to nurture the pseudopod, defined as "a temporary and tender projection of the nucleus of the inner-self, upon the success of whose gropings the nucleus is entirely dependent for its progress and sustenance."

They announced that they would welcome "whatever seems to us artistic, vital, significant which is being done by writers who have their cultural roots here whatever their present locale and interests may be, and by those from no matter where who have been grafted to us, and are now bearing fruit nourished by our soil." They had an equally clear idea of what would be unacceptable: "We are not interested in perpetuating that sterile fetichism of the Old South which has so long gripped our section."

Miss Smith and Miss Snelling read widely, enjoyed the unpretentious confidence in their judgment which can come of being upper class although in a small community, and shared in particular an interest in psychoanalysis. They read Freud's books as they appeared in English and followed the various reactions to and revisions of his doctrines. The tone and substance of *Pseudopodia* produced complimentary notices on a wider scale than the editors had imagined possible when they ventured

the first number comprising twelve pages without covers. The most notable reaction was Bernard De Voto's assertion, "Its editors do not write as Southerners but as intelligent and educated people with a lively interest in the subjects they are discussing; nevertheless what they have to say is colored by the experience and culture of their part of the South. The best promise of regionalism is likely to be fulfilled in just that way. . . ." ¹ Within a year, they had subscribers in thirteen states and two foreign countries, and their tone grew more professional.

At this juncture, they changed the title, nudged on by uncomprehending or humorous comments but also by a change in their idea of the magazine. A number of readers intimated that they could not help thinking of nostrums for ailments of the feet, and Lillian Smith has recorded the editors' chagrin on receiving a communication addressed innocently to *Pseudophobia*. The emphasis continued to be literary for some time, but by the fourth number the editors were giving clear indications of broader interests. In that number they announced the first of a series of prize contests which were to be a distinctive feature. They offered a small prize for a poem, story, or belletristic essay; they offered a larger prize for "an essay on any economic, social, religious, or literary theme of concern to the South today," a sketch of a Southern personality, or an article "on the United States Constitution and Liberalism"; and two further prizes for nonfiction.

With the number for Spring 1937, the magazine became *The North Georgia Review*, and the change of emphasis went a little further than intended. The editors had devised the contest partly as a means of attracting contributions but were disconcerted to receive no prize-worthy fiction or verse. The quality of the nonfiction was higher, but much of it came from the North rather than the South. The magazine never did receive much

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publishable fiction and verse. The most notable fiction to appear in it was Lillian Smith's. And the editors were set the problem of discovering and bringing to expression Southern opinion on the issues they regarded as significant. It was easy enough to get expressions reflecting the "fetichism of the Old South."

They conceived of contests also as a device for rewarding at least a few selected contributors since they lacked the means to pay for contributions in general. Subscriptions were a dollar a year, and the magazine carried no advertising. They could offer prizes of between five and fifty dollars on occasion and eventually offered a first prize of \$250 in the most elaborate of the contests they devised.

From the first, they also offered contributors compensation in the form of an invitation to an annual house party on Old Screamer early in the summer before the Laurel Falls Camp opened. The camp buildings, including dormitory cabins, assembly and dining halls, and a library, in addition to Lillian Smith's residence, were delightful for the purpose. The camp swimming pool, tennis courts, stable, and hiking trails were available, and the camp cook, whose wares were celebrated—Miss Smith and one of her sisters being excellent cooks themselves—could be drafted. The hospitality was not limited to contributors. As the magazine became known, a great variety of people made their way up the precipitous driveway through hardwood, dogwood, and rhododendron to the rustic camp buildings set in an extensive naturalistic garden where Lillian Smith now lies buried.

Miss Smith and Miss Snelling soon began to reach out to the interesting or interested people other than contributors they wanted to know and thought should know each other, and their house parties became a permanent element in the ambience of the magazine, serving as a focal point for liberal opinion in the

region. One of the first large parties for people other than contributors, held in the fall of 1936, was biracial in spite of the risks in what was still Gene Talmadge country. Thereafter, blacks were often among the guests on Old Screamer. A model of civilized interracial conversation was set which is not often matched even today.

A few details of two of the most memorable house parties survive in the forms of a guest list and notes of invitation and response, now among the portion of Lillian Smith's papers on deposit in the Special Collections of the University of Florida Libraries, and of reminiscences which Miss Smith set down informally for the use of a biographer.² Late in August, 1939, Miss Smith and Miss Snelling invited twenty-two prominent Southern white men, from business, law, publishing, and the universities, to the mountain. Hardly anyone knew anyone else although the editors had been in correspondence with most of the guests in connection with the magazine.

According to Lillian Smith's notes, "Everyone we had selected turned out to be both a gentleman and a lot of fun and interesting everybody had this in common: a deep concern for a new and different South. Otherwise, we had socialists, one fellow-traveler (if not communist—I think he was always a fellow traveler), good old Democrats, New Dealers, professors who did not think politically but did think socially, a few people who thought in literary terms, only. We had wonderful food. Nobody drank too much; nobody got obscene or nasty in his talk, nobody was sexy: you see, their brains were electrified by all that was being said. . . . I think the cabin cots, and open windows and rough, crude buildings put them in an out-of-door woodsy mood. Anyway, there was simplicity with sophistication, hilarity with good manners, and it was fun." In the midst of this party, the outbreak of World War II was announced by

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radio on Old Screamer, deepening the social emotions.

In September, 1942, Miss Smith and Miss Snelling made the bold experiment of entertaining a group of twenty-four well known women, half from the North, half from the South, half of them white, the other half black. Miss Smith's notes tell us: "They were here four days; we went swimming, we played tennis, we talked our heads off, some just roamed around on the mountain; we had as usual marvelous food. Our cook, an old-fashioned Negro lady from Atlanta . . . was very troubled, and a bit shocked, when she found it was bi-racial. . . . I sent Mrs. Paul Robeson in the first morning after breakfast to talk to her and persuade her to see that it was working beautifully. I handled things discreetly as I tend to do, and nothing happened. We were all a little scared—why not admit it?—and we watched our steps; we kept casual visitors away and we were discreet in every possible way. It apparently did not disturb anyone. The talk was very candid, and we had sudden arguments, sudden antagonisms rose to the surface and were then laughed away; it was a matter of raw nerves meeting raw nerves."

Out of the parties, as out of contests and surveys, came a community spirit which was reflected in the magazine. Miss Snelling has said that it seemed to function to some extent like a lonely hearts club for readers and contributors who, having felt isolated with liberal views in towns all over the South, were surprised to find out who else in town also subscribed. The editorial tone and position derived as much from the interchange of views in the lonely hearts club (and, as we shall see, from the editors' travels in the region) as from any strictly defined ideology although from the first the editors disassociated themselves from the approach to Southern affairs represented by the Agrarian writers and the *Southern Review*. They were most sympathetic with the work of the Department of Sociology of

the University of North Carolina. Howard W. Odum's *Southern Regions of the United States* and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* were published the same year *Pseudopodia* appeared, and it is amusing still to read the litmus reactions of the fledgling magazine to these extremes of regional attitude. The interest in psychoanalysis which Miss Smith and Miss Snelling shared inclined them also to sympathize with another classic treatment of the region which was in progress when they started the magazine, the study of a Southern town (Indianola, Mississippi) which the psychoanalytically-oriented psychologist John Dollard and the anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker began jointly and finished separately with their books *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* and *After Freedom*.

To the right of the magazine stood the attitudes expressed in the Agrarians' *I'll Take My Stand*, William Alexander Percy's *Lanterns on the Levee*, and, on a more popular level, *Gone with the Wind*. Its affinities were with the books by Odum and other sociologists, Dollard, and Powdermaker, and W. J. Cash's *The Mind of the South*, a pre-publication excerpt of which appeared in the magazine in 1936. Cash was grateful for the encouragement; his book and Lillian Smith's novel *Strange Fruit* are two instances, at least, in which the magazine succeeded in the original intention to nurture the literary pseudopod.

The magazine accurately reflected the independent but complementary minds of the editors and was, therefore, never wholly enlisted in any party. The editors were not unappreciative of the literary talent which was conspicuous on the right, among the group Miss Smith once called the United Writers of the Confederacy; and they felt as partial and inadequate any approach which was studiously quantitative or too theoretical and abstract. They were not academics, political activists, or members of a literary coterie.

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The first number exemplifies a division of labor and influence which they maintained throughout the run. Lillian Smith took the creative and imaginative side with a story which proved to be a foreshadowing of *Strange Fruit* and started her column of widely ranging personal comment, "Dope with Lime." Paula Snelling represented the critical and analytical with an essay on Thomas Wolfe. Miss Snelling tended to hold her writings for the magazine to literary essays and book reviews while Miss Smith was inclined to enlarge the scope of the magazine to include social and economic topics. For all the differences in personality and temperament, the two editors concurred in recognizing their ignorance about the region. The steps they took to remedy this tended to reinforce Miss Smith's more inclusive ambitions for the magazine, which began to carry reportage, especially of Southern opinion on a wide range of topics. From this emerged in time a strong tone of advocacy, particularly of reform in race relations which was perceived by both editors as the *sine qua non* of any desirable development in the region and also—what was not then very widely believed—in the country. One of the most interesting aspects of the magazine was the way its intuitively liberal position on racial matters was buttressed over four or five years by travel and inquiry and took on the impressiveness of a logical conclusion derived from an accumulation of experience and concrete data.

When the editors changed the name to *The North Georgia Review*, they added as a subtitle "A Magazine of the Southern Regions," which, although not, as Miss Snelling recalls, a conscious reference to Odum's work, must be taken as an acknowledgment of the complexity of the field they meant to cover. They conceived of themselves as Southerners discovering the South—to echo the title of another book, by Jonathan Daniels, which was widely read at the time. Through their contests and

surveys, in the devising of which Miss Snelling found herself adept, they regularly explored opinion. In 1939–40 and 1940–41 they received travel grants from the Rosenwald Foundation. “We wanted,” Miss Smith has recorded in the reminiscences already mentioned, “to see for ourselves big plantations in Mississippi, sharecroppers’ union meetings, miners’ union meetings; we wanted to talk to big planters and big industrialists; we wanted to visit jails, prisons, and mental hospitals; we wanted to visit on Negro campuses and talk to many educated Negroes; we wanted to talk to a lot of poor whites in various states; we wanted to visit cooperatives; we wanted to meet politicians (didn’t have much luck with this); we wanted to meet as many big mules of the power structure as possible (had more success here); we wanted to talk to people working in the New Deal with Farm Security, Youth programs, etc. etc. Not because we were sociologists which of course we weren’t—neither of us has ever had a course in sociology—but because we were human, full of curiosity and concern, and wanted to see the ‘real South’ which the Agrarians and the *Southern Review* apparently knew nothing about.”

Following the two years of extensive travel on the Rosenwald grants, they continued to travel the region for three years as members of Rosenwald’s board assigned to interview candidates for scholarships and fellowships, particularly at Negro colleges but at many white ones as well. World War II was raging, and the contact with students which Miss Smith and Miss Snelling had in their Rosenwald interviews led to the development of another prophetic strain in the magazine, the warning that a “generation gap” would result from aversion to a war felt by the young to be unjustified. They saw the sinister connections between racism and war and pointed to the acute irony in the situation of Negro youth drafted to fight abroad outrages which

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they and their forebears had suffered for centuries at home.

While energetic and open-minded exploration of the region was insurance against sentimental or defensive parochialism, the magazine needed bearings beyond the region as well if it was to aspire to more than local interest. These the editors found chiefly in a certain amount of foreign travel and in their psycho-analytic approach. The latter helped make them aware of and provided a method of treating a number of broadly human issues which subsequently became obsessional in the country at large—racism, aggression, the cultural rôles of the sexes,³ and the disillusionment of the young being the main instances. Bearings in foreign culture were available through Miss Smith's experience as a music teacher in a mission school at Huchow, China, from 1922 to 1925. In observing the relations between Europeans and Americans on the one hand and the Chinese on the other, she had her eyes opened to the racism of the American South in which she had been reared and became increasingly conscious of the sexual undertones of racism. In time, she dealt with these themes in a novel with a Chinese setting, never published, the manuscript of which was destroyed when her house on Old Screamer burned in 1955. The magazine gained more foreign background when, in 1938, Miss Smith and Miss Snelling extensively toured Brazil, where they noted parallels to conditions in the South and acquired a perspective on Uncle Sam as *gringo*.

By the time the name of the magazine was changed again, to *South Today*, the development from a primarily literary to an inclusively cultural emphasis was complete. The change in the editors' thinking can be exemplified from their proposal to the Rosenwald Foundation for support for another project growing out of the same interests which produced the magazine.⁴ They first proposed a book consisting of a critical appraisal of the past century of Southern literature but then modified the proposal.

They said they had "become convinced that we should shift focus and content to include a wider, fuller portrait of the South, letting its literature find its rightful place among the older varied and significant aspects of cultural and economic and racial patterns." They now meant to deal with the literature *per se* but also as symptomatic and felt they must discuss the environment, drawing on the recent work of the social scientists. "With this new knowledge at their disposal (and implemented by the sharpened perceptions which psychoanalysis can give) critics should find a survey and analysis of literature *in* the southern scene richly rewarding." Their book never materialized, but their magazine took the proposed course.

Meanwhile, the magazine had survived both the financial crises which are usual features of little magazines and the pressures produced by the editors' positions on race and war. Lillian Smith acted as publisher throughout. Her means were limited, and the magazine was possible only because it could be cheaply printed and because she and Miss Snelling did all of the work until the last three years and never paid themselves any salary. As things turned out, they themselves remained the major contributors and paid themselves no more in that capacity than as editorial and office labor. In addition to the yearly subscription rate of one dollar they offered sustaining subscriptions at higher rates. With few exceptions, the donations they received in this or other forms were on the order of five to ten dollars. Only the advance which Miss Smith received for *Strange Fruit* in 1943 and income from it after publication in 1944 enabled the magazine to continue and obtain necessary office help.

At first the magazine was printed in Atlanta by the firm which did the job printing for the Laurel Falls Camp. Depression conditions meant that it would work for a profit of five per cent. After the liberal tone of the magazine became marked, it was

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transferred to a printer in Nashville who was known to be sympathetic. The last three years of the run were produced by the county newspaper and job-printing shop in Clayton. As the size of the numbers and the circulation increased, the editors were compelled to combine some of the quarterly numbers before going semi-annual in 1944.

Despite their outspokenness on the race issue and the reservations they expressed about the war, they came through remarkably unscathed although in 1942 and 1943 their situation was touchy and one number of the magazine was temporarily denied the mails. The number concerned, *South Today* for Fall-Winter 1942-1943, contained some of the editor's most effective statements on racism. They turned it over to a volunteer assistant to mail from Atlanta because they were having difficulties with the Clayton post office concerning their second-class mailing permit. The Atlanta assistant found the job too great and, without informing Miss Smith and Miss Snelling, farmed it out to a commercial mailer who proved to have Ku Klux Klan connections. A considerable number of copies reached segregationist leaders and officials of the City of Atlanta and the State of Georgia. The Atlanta postmaster was persuaded to hold up the mailing of the few magazines which had been deposited in the post office, and the mailer kept the rest along with the list of subscribers. Only through the personal intervention of Miss Smith and several of her friends were the magazines retrieved and finally mailed from Clayton.

The ramifications of this affair were extensive. The editors heard that they were to be investigated by the Georgia legislature and knew that the Governor had been approached. Agents, purportedly from the Federal Bureau of Investigation but actually, as the editors were able to determine, from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, questioned the Clayton postmistress

concerning alleged infractions of postal regulations by the magazine. Friends of the editors brought pressure on the Governor and others to prevent an investigation, but the outcome was in doubt as late as December, 1943, when Miss Smith felt it necessary to confer with Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House both about the threat of investigation and continuing difficulties with the mailing permit.

No further difficulties of the kind occurred, however; and the magazine went on to increasing influence and came to an end just because of the burdens of success. The decision to suspend publication after the Fall-Winter number for 1944-1945 was forced by the destruction of the magazine office in an accidental fire and by the distraction of Miss Smith's energies following the publication of *Strange Fruit*. Both circumstances occurred in 1944, and the editors continued the magazine as long as they did only in the hope of finding a managing editor and of being able to take for themselves less demanding rôles as contributing editors, an arrangement which never proved possible.

In selecting items for this volume, we have attempted to illustrate the chief distinctions of the magazine as we see them: the durability of its literary judgments, the combination of insight and realism in its treatment of the race issue, and the quality of its regionalism.⁵ We have organized the selections into parts devoted to works by Lillian Smith, to works by Paula Snelling, to works by the two editors jointly, to works by other contributors, and to contests, surveys, and symposia. Within each part, the items appear in chronological order with a few exceptions, as in the case of reviews of several books by a given author which seem to read better in a group. The date of the number from which each selection comes is given in square brackets at the end of the selection.

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As the most voluminous contributor, Lillian Smith is no doubt under-represented partly because of space limitations but partly because most of the fiction which was a major element in her work for the magazine has been omitted. The bulk of it consisted of pre-publication excerpts from *Strange Fruit*, to which we must refer readers. One of her most characteristic essays, "Two Men and a Bargain—A Parable of the Solid South," from *South Today* for Spring 1943, has also been omitted here because it is available as the second chapter of Part III of Miss Smith's *Killers of the Dream*.

The only other section which seems to require comment apart from the occasional explanatory notes we have supplied throughout for particular items is the concluding section devoted to contests, surveys, and symposia. These were a hallmark of the magazine but difficult to anthologize. In a separate introduction to this section, we have attempted to elucidate the purposes of the contests, surveys, and symposia and then to summarize and sample enough of the material to give a vivid impression.

The literary judgments which the magazine printed, especially those by Paula Snelling, have in general been sustained in later criticism. The decade 1936–1945 is one of the most noteworthy in the literary history of the South, and the editors kept up extraordinarily well. The only definite bias is to be found in the treatment accorded the Agrarian writers, but it was a conscious and on the whole a carefully managed bias. The one writer we think may have received less than his due was William Faulkner, who, if the greatest, was for that reason probably the most difficult for contemporaries to assess. He was reviewed respectfully and in article after article set apart as a special case pending the further development of his work and the attainment of perspective.

The magazine was certainly ahead of its time and in some ways

ahead of the present in matter-of-course and balanced reviewing of Negro writers. In formulating the prospectus for the book which was to analyze "literature *in* the southern scene," the editors promised that "the Negro will be treated (as will the white man) as much without bias as the authors are capable. The Negro's viewpoint, hardships, contributions, accommodation-traits (so shockingly neglected by historian and literary man alike) will receive as much study and analysis as will be given to the white." This was the attitude which informed the reviewing in the magazine. The tone of the magazine in this matter may be represented by Paula Snelling's article "Three Native Sons," included in this volume, in which she dealt with Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Erskine Caldwell's *Trouble in July*, and William Faulkner's *The Hamlet*. The magazine was also enterprising in having a Negro writer review white comment on the region (as when W. E. B. DuBois was asked to review Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*) or in having a Negro comment on a book about a Negro (as when James Weldon Johnson was asked to review Robert Allerton Parker's *The Incredible Messiah*, concerning Father Divine).

Despite the therapeutic approach to racism and the positive advocacy of civil rights for Negroes which became so marked in the last years, the treatment of the race issue in general remained even-handed. The assumption always was that the Negro minority must be secured in its constitutional rights and fully integrated into American society. The editors were, however, eminently practical in their advice to Negroes and whites alike as to how to break the tabus of caste and class or the psychopathic prejudices of race. Early and adamant in their insistence upon the removal of invidious distinctions in public accommodations, they nevertheless had few illusions about the possibility or desirability of coercing private relations. As a touchstone for

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the fully developed attitude of the magazine in the matter, we refer readers to Lillian Smith's "There Are Things To Do," which is included below.

Finally, as to the quality of the regionalism exemplified by the magazine, this was the result of the editors' constant concern with context and horizon as well as with intra-regional affairs. Such events as Franklin D. Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Supreme Court, the death of Freud, and the outbreak of World War II figure in the magazine as regional concerns. The editors' interest in psychoanalysis, in the causes of racism and war, in the social rôles of the sexes and their importance in planning for peace, and in the growth and development of children often had the effect of saving their regional data from the limitations of local values by making them seem just particular illustrations of universal human issues.

H. W.
R. S. S.

NOTES

1. Bernard DeVoto, "Regionalism or the Coterie Manifesto," *Saturday Review of Literature*, XV, No. 5 (November 28, 1936), 8.

2. Miss Smith's notes are in the possession of Miss Snelling, by whose permission we quote them.

3. For background on the interest in sex rôles, see Redding S. Sugg, Jr., "Lillian Smith and the Condition of Woman," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXXI (Spring, 1972), 155-164.

4. A copy of this proposal is among the portion of Lillian Smith's papers which is in the Special Collections of the University of Florida Libraries.

5. Complete runs of the magazine, while scarce, are to be found in a number of libraries, for example those of the Universities of Florida and Georgia and of Yale University; the last has microfilmed the magazine. For a list of the magazine's contents, see Margaret Sullivan, "A Bibliography of Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling, with an Index to *South Today*," edited by Joseph R. Riley, *Mississippi Valley Collection Bulletin*, No. 4 (Memphis: John Willard Brister Library, Memphis State University, 1971), pp. 53-82.

I

Works by Lillian Smith



‡ Dope with Lime¹

A puny, puling infant . . . yes we know, but blandly we shall shut our eyes, follow the honorable precedent set by cave mamas and talk of its future . . . In each issue we hope to have a critical estimate of one or more contemporary southern writers. In the summer issue Mr. Erskine Caldwell may read, if he can tear his eyes from his Georgia and New England imbeciles for a look at little *Pseudopodia*, about himself . . . In the fall we shall peer over our specs at our women novelists . . . Reviews of *Who Owns America* edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate, and *Gone With the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell, will appear in the June issue.

We want to review in each issue one or more unpublished novels. These novels may be out on their patient search for a publisher; they may have flopped on the door steps. Carbon copies will do for our sharp eyes. If the novels "won't do" silence will be tenderly drawn. If they show promise or real achievement we shall ring the old dinner bell proudly . . . We hope thereby to give encouragement to weary cramped fingers as well as occasionally to tweak a publisher's ear. [Spring 1936]

Perched high up on Old Screamer swinging our legs over "space and the twelve clean winds," good fun that it is, doesn't make for literary tittle tattle. Squirrels and whipporwills don't like it and our mountaineer friend Joe says thar ain't no sech varmint roun' thet he's heerd tell of, but thar's a sight of mourn-in' doves and he's been aimin' ter name it ter us ter look out for a uncommon summer.

As indeed we are: for not since Caroline Miller's *Lamb in His Bosom* have Georgians shown so much anticipatory excitement as *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell of Atlanta has aroused. Edwin Granberry, reviewer for the New York Sun,

writes us that his enthusiasm, soon to be expressed in much print, is boundless.

So . . . Dope with Lime took off their mountain boots, put on their town clothes and after an interval of space and time knocked on Miss Mitchell's door. A very small keen-eyed red-headed attractive person asked, "Which is which?" said immediately, "I'm scared to death. Do come in." But curled up on a divan, drinking black coffee, she really did not look scared but very alert and intelligent and vivacious with the situation well in the hollow of her hand, and seemed far more interested in discussing Faulkner, Cabell, Emily Clark, Wolfe, and some mutual friends than her own book. "I'm sick to death of it," she groaned. "You would be too if you had spent six months checking ten thousand references—or was it twenty?"

"Were they all wrong?"

"They were right. But you see, I didn't know they were. I wrote the book never expecting to publish it, from my memory of the thousands of conversations I have listened to all my life about Lee, Sherman, Lincoln, Longstreet, Appomattox, the Battle of Atlanta . . . I didn't write of the past," she laughed, "but of contemporary happenings. Time has stood still hereabouts." Again she laughed. "I had to check. I don't dare face some good old Confederate soldier, whiskers bristling with indignation as he points his finger at me and says 'Sister, you said Lee was in that cornfield north of the old cow pasture on the morning of July 14, 1863, when by God he was in the cornfield a mile south of that one.' You can't . . . not safely."

She calls her book "a Victorian novel," insists that she has no theories of style, trying only to avoid journalese. But she says she wrote the first chapter seventy times. She is very modest, seems to prefer visiting her friends in little Georgia towns to New York literary teas, declares her book unimportant, herself unimportant, has no desire to be a "writer" and hopes the Lord will protect her from writing another book. [Summer 1936]

For some time now this column has had a notion that several of our most discussed Southern writers are not read by many Southerners, that their books are not available in most of our libraries and are often not to be purchased in our bookstores.

(*Dope with Lime* had the odd experience of asking for a Caldwell novel in one of Atlanta's shops and receiving this reply, "No, I am proud to say we haven't that book." "Have you any of Caldwell's books?" *Dwight L* persisted. Silence. Then reluctantly "Yes, we have—one. But I'm sure you wouldn't enjoy reading it.") Also, an impression has become less vague of late that we do not consume much of the proletarian literature. So, adding more to their already heavy load we sent out to Georgia librarians questionnaires about these matters. The returns are too incomplete for a summary but gleanings may be of interest: E. A. Robinson leads as favorite poet, Edna Millay is second, but Edgar Guest, James W. Riley, Eugene Field (we seem vague on literary periods in Ga.) have their admirers—so have T. S. Eliot, Conrad Aiken and Ezra Pound . . . Only two libraries thus far admit to possessing a Caldwell novel (one of these has two by him, both in demand), only two have a Faulkner novel but a number have one or two of Thomas Wolfe's. Only one has a Grace Lumpkin novel. Two only, have any of the other "proletarian novels" . . . One librarian explains that she doesn't like to have on her shelves books with bad spelling in them . . . *Gone With the Wind*, *Magnificent Obsession*, *Green Light* are the most popular novels but *The Last Puritan* makes a good showing in small towns and *Lamb in His Bosom* is in steady demand . . . A diversity in the non-fiction field but *North to the Orient* is leading, *Wake Up and Live* stirs many slumberous hearts—in rural districts Emily Post is a favorite. [Fall 1936]

This spring more than forty writers will thumb the fresh-inked pages of their books on the South. Our warts, ground-itch, hookworm, pellagra, and erosion of soul and body will be spread in type like our candlewick coverlets are hung on fence rails to catch the casual eye. Peach blossoms, southern charm, old Confederate uniforms, a magnolia, a doodle bug and a pickaninny or two will be there, and all the special flavors of all the special regions of all the southern states will reek their special odors to high heaven.

And for what? No one seems quite to know. All we know is that we are having a good time. A kind of prolonged scavenger hunt is upon us. No more below the Line do we sleep in the sun.

We are too busy racing each other to show what we have "found." We have scoured the surface and are going a little beneath it now. For what? For more things to show you. Funny, curious, ugly, pretty, disgusting things. Their significance? We can't stop to think that out. If we did somebody would find out more than we do . . . The scratching in the topsoil goes on. And observers watch the dust fly and the clods heave, taking their sneezes as they come, knowing that some day some one of these diggers is going to strike bedrock. When that day comes, there will be a southern novel that will deserve the adjectives we southerners (as well as our northern brethren) confer as easily as we give the title of 'colonel' to gentlemen whose only claim to it is their quite obvious lack of claim to anything else. [Spring 1937]

The almost phenomenal success of Della T. Lutes' *The Country Kitchen* makes us wonder why some southerner of gustatory inclinations does not write an equally interesting book on Georgia food and the folks who eat it. We'd match against the world our chicken pilau, crackling bread, stewed corn, hopping John, fried chicken, back-bone-and-rice (do you smother yours?), coconut cake (six thin layers), little flaky biscuits, home-made peach ice cream (it's brownish, not pink), brandied peaches, Mayhaw and scuppernong jelly, boiled pinders, fried fish and corn cakes . . . and then to take your appetite away: the big old stove, the never-too-clean dish rags (that's what they were called), the flies, the little waves of heat oozing up out of the hot sand at the back door, the big Elephant Ears which got many a splashing of greasy dish-water (before the sink was put in), and to complete this process there should be appended a chapter called very simply: Cracker and Nigger Food. Only about a page would be required, for it would contain little save collards and corn bread, white-side, grits and on rare occasions a hunk of cheese, a box of soda crackers, a can of "sallmon" or a can of sardines. That's what most of us Georgians eat, when we eat . . . We heard an official who is in daily contact with the people of his county say recently that in his opinion 70 per cent of them never had enough to eat. . . . The current genuflection to local color never fails to amuse us: we heard a novelist say not long ago and most seriously that "it was extremely difficult—and one had to be scrupulously

careful—to avoid confusing the mannerisms of the Georgia and the Alabama Negroes.” . . . It might be more difficult for us to ponder the secrets of their hearts and minds but perhaps more rewarding. One wonders when we shall stop thinking of the Negro as a minstrel, a Laughing Man, a pathetic pet, a quaint objet d’art and begin considering him as a human being. [Spring 1937]

A Catechism

Not long ago we were invited to join an Innocent Club. (See January Forum. James Rorty’s *Mobilizing the Innocents*.) We were impressed.

We were impressed?

Certainly.

Did we join?

No.

So we aren’t innocent?

No.

Nor orthodox?

No.

We don’t believe in the divinity of Stalin?

No.

Ah . . . so we are fascists?

No.

Then . . . we *are* communists?

No.

But if we aren’t communists we must be fascists!

No.

Oh . . . just provincial southerners.

No.

Weren’t we born in the South?

Yes.

Don’t we live in the South?

Yes.

Don’t we love the South?

YES.

Then we *are* provincial southerners . . . thought so all along.

No.

Aren't we Democrats?

No.

But don't we approve of most of the New Deal experiments?

Yes.

And we certainly believe in the democratic way of government?

Yes.

Doesn't that make us Democrats?

No.

Are we *Republicans*?

No.

Well, what are we?

Two poor dear girls (an Atlanta columnist says) way up on a mountain top trying to express ourselves. (Give em a hand, boys—he says.)

What are we trying to express?

Besides ourselves?

Yes.

Well . . . the truth.

Ah . . . so we know the truth?

No.

But how can we express the truth if we don't know the truth?

(Silence)

Can we answer that?

No.

Now . . . we say we are southerners?

Yes.

We believe the Negro is a human being?

Yes.

We'd like to see an anti-lynching bill pass?

Yes.

We believe share-croppers are starving?

Yes.

And something should be done about it?

Yes.

We think degeneracy, vulgarity, complacency peculiar to the South?

No.

Are they as prevalent in New York?

Yes.

Then we are justified in defending the South?

No.

But we can't love the South if we don't stand by it right or wrong!

(Silence)

Did we hear that last statement?

Yes.

Do we agree?

No.

But we oppose fascism?

Yes.

Then we'd go to war to save the world from fascism?

No.

But we do hate the Germans?

No.

The Italians?

No.

Surely the Japs?

No.

Ah . . . so we are indifferent to the suffering of the Chinese?

No.

Yet we are willing for Japan to trample the life out of her?

No.

We believe that China has contributed more to real civilization than any other living nation?

Yes.

And our sense of decency is violated by Japan's exploitation?

Yes.

We consider the Japanese regime a fascistic one?

Yes.

And yet we don't hate the Japs?

No.

Is there any evil on earth greater than fascism?

Yes. Its progenitors.

War?

Yes.

Poverty?

Yes.

Hate?

Yes.

Stupidity?

Yes.

And yet we have no program?

No.

No 'true' way to salvation?

No.

Just searching for truth?

Yes.

Don't we believe in anything?

Yes.

Personal integrity?

Yes.

Compassion?

Yes.

Disinterestedness?

Yes.

Aren't we a bit oldfashioned?

Yes.

Perhaps a little provincial?

Perhaps.

Maybe 'innocent' after all?

Maybe.

[Winter 1937-38]

At a time when many of us use the international situation as a whip with which we flagellate ourselves into a frenzy of hate that may give relief from personal frustrations but rarely offers adequate therapy for the world's illness, even a suggestion of constructive analysis is to be listened to gratefully. *The New Republic's* 25-page special supplement published March 30, on "National Defense, A Progressive Policy" is a sane, quietly spoken, realistic appraisal of our national needs and resources. It reminds us that our country's defense against external enemies is only so impregnable as its internal strength and measures this strength in terms of health, economic security, conservation of natural resources and the emotional stability of its citizens . . . Erskine Caldwell's *Journeyman* which even New York's Minsky habitués, deprived as they are now by city ordinance of their old diet, could not long stomach, closed after a few weeks of clumsy

double entendre, blood-letting, and what purported to be a Georgia revival orgy. We have long defended Mr. Caldwell's right to use whatever material he can lay his hands on for artistic purposes; we have admired his humor and his skill even though the humor has a strong chitlin' flavor and the skill is not consistently apparent; we have [called] 'courage' what others have sometimes titled 'exhibitionism'; we were deeply stirred by his sober commentary on Margaret Bourke-White's photographs in *You Have Seen Their Faces*; but we did not like privy-talk when we were children attending a small town public school and we don't like it any better today—and we are more offended by literary whoring than by those not altogether voluntary activities of the 'pretty ladies' who in our town used to live in the Haunted House. [Spring 1938]

As for the southern literary scene, it seems at present as quiet, as moveless as any lover of lethargy could desire—in sharp contrast to the intellectual vigor of the southern sociologists, in quaint juxtaposition to the social unrest of the southern people. That seventy-five per cent of southern novels are antiques before they are off the press (we shall let statisticians of other regions make their own reports) we know. And yet always in the South and North too there is a steady market for antiques. So it is no use to blame the publishers . . . That little Negro children could be taught more easily to read (even via the old road of recitation) had they books about their own world and their own race, rather than a sole second-hand literary diet of White stories and White heroes, is only slowly draining through the hard shell of our democratic complacency. And were we ever to become so sane as to put in our school-readers for both White and Colored children, stories about White and Negro people, stories of Negro history as well as White history, of African culture as well as European, then many of our race problems would fade away. [Fall-Winter 1938–39]

We have just finished reading another batch of southern novels and have not felt very happy since. Despite a kind of chronic euphoria of expectation as to the future of southern literature, we have acute seizures of melancholia after each sampling of

the current output. For it seems that nearly every fresh young (or old) writer, no matter how bright and shiny his car may be or how hard he steps on the gas, slides very quickly into one or another of the eight deep ruts in southern fiction, and stays there. Or, if by rocking his car hard, he succeeds in bouncing out he merely bounces into the next set of ruts. Or perhaps even worse, he clears his front wheels, only to have the rear wheels of his unconscious assumptions drag along in the same old grooves. The old steep road to greatness we know is one long skid in bad weather and the weather is nearly always bad, but though it is safer to stay in the ruts, sooner or later the ruts deepen, leaving us with mired hub and futilely rotating wheels. . . . You will have your own vocabulary for these ruts (as what driver hasn't!) but ours we pass on to you:

(1) *Dixie Dirt Dobbers*. These, as you surmise, are the writers who are on the prowl for the filth of southern life, gathering their dirt where they may—and that is everywhere—plastering it on, going out for more, dobbing it, until there appears by virtue of sheer bulk, a book. Their method is to go where their eyes, ears and noses lead them; the whole process being less than cerebral. They simply have an instinct for stench which, while not entirely non-existent in any of us, lies dormant in the majority of those who can spell. If there must be a moral trailer to this description, perhaps we should add that the Dixie Dirt Dobbers seem to us to fulfill in literature as useful a function as garbage collectors in civic life. We should guess that in matters of imagination, vocabulary, and insight into human character there would be a fair correlation between the two groups. (2) *The Manicurists* . . . These writers work in the Beauty Shop of Old Southern Culture. They have acquired a glittering vocabulary of unorientated meanings and they spend their days shaping their polished words into pleasing designs. You will recognize at once among them some well-known Agrarians but most of the old Fugitive group fit with more ease into: (3) *The U. W. C.'s*. Now the United Writers of the Confederacy, whatever else they may be, cannot be defined as one of America's minority groups. Rather do they seem akin to a horde of locusts as they swarm down on southern history and devour every leaf. But unlike that small canny insect they know not a 17-year cycle of restraint. Nor, be it said, do

their publishers. Let one of these writers sell a book and the rest of Murray Hill closes shop and pants up and down the byways of Dixie on a treasure hunt for that lost Confederate gold. The U. W. C.'s should of course be plowed under with the cotton. The one-crop system of Civil War books has done to southern literature what cotton has done to southern soil. They are both money crops however; hence as long as one United writer or one cotton-grower cleans up on the market, a thousand share-croppers will spring up in his place hoping for "furnish."

(4) The *Antique Dealers* are pleasant writers and nearly all of us like to spend an occasional hour with them. They have a smooth way with chronology and are at home with decor. They can gentle the past by letting enough dust gather to dim resemblance to the crude machine-made present. They are expert at putting an antique finish on contemporaries. They can furnish you with an authentic copy of any manner, dialect, costume or locale. They love to show you life's major tragedies—through a stereopticon, and are pleased when you smile and murmur, "How quaint!" They are a resourceful group and are equal to reproducing all of mankind's knick-knacks. They fail only to create man himself. Yet, once in a while, the human beings whose words and ways and keepsakes have been collected for publication will follow their possessions into a book—little wistful, interlinear ghosts, haunting every page.

(5) *Life's Softeners and Purifiers*. These are the authors who write their books on filter paper, straining out the mud and the dregs, the animal residue from the nature of man. Such are the wholesome and "human" books, well sanitated before distribution, to be consumed safely by dewy-eyed millions.

(6) In this rut are the *Pips*. They are the writers who have broken through restrictive mind-sets (and heart-sets), who have sloughed off racial and class and religious taboos, who give life a straight stare in the face. But they are a little wobbled from their effort at renascence and stagger around for the rest of their lives with feathers not quite dry. We like the Pips; but we wish they had enough vitality to survive the trauma of second birth and mature into full-feathered artistry.

(7) The *Finger Painters* take a vocabulary and place it in the middle of a large sheet of blank paper. They stare at the paper,

at random stirring the vocabulary with their fingers. Gradually they begin to use the big-muscle spontaneous movements of childhood, and the vocabulary is stirred more violently. After a time of such hypnotic preliminaries, the conscious mind with its disciplines and restraints becomes too bored to care, the super-ego gets a glassy stare in its eye and begins to nod, the preconscious lets down its hair and starts babbling, and out of the unconscious realm rushes a magnificent and colorful horde of infantile fantasies. It is a beautiful sight to behold (as anyone who has seen the finger paintings of young children can well believe) though the intellectual content is none too high. The process seems to have not only therapeutic value for the finger painter but gives a few onlookers a vicarious and sweeping release from bondage. There are others who merely get very angry. L. E. S. selects the late Thomas Wolfe as the South's master finger painter, and William Faulkner on occasions as his runner-up, though both have written books which bounce out of any rut.

(8) In our last rut we place the *Sandwich Men*—those writers who trudge up and down the back streets of the South constricting human nature to fit the dimensions of a Cause. Scrouging their characters into its perimeter they carefully snip off any tag ends of truth that do not fit its rectangular contours . . . [Spring 1939]

Freud's life, like complex and beautiful music, we shall listen to a long time yet before we wholly accept. But it will have its "moment of immortality" and that moment we believe will endure until mankind understands and profits by it. [Fall-Winter 1939]

A recent 4,000-mile swing through the South, a less recent 3,000 miles of wandering through Brazil set against memories of years in China's interior have made LES ponder as never before the untidy fact that we Americans—*norte e sul*—are a people at home with ugliness, at ease with the shoddy. . . . Three agrarian cultures: poverty common to all, all equally dependent upon foreign capital for industrial development, one so loving of folk beauty and two so brashly uncaring. "Youth and old age" we say to explain it sometimes, yet after all we are not a young people,

but a people whose roots were cut and never replanted in a New-World culture, whose continuity with the past was abruptly broken. In part at least, perhaps the explanation lies just here: that we are a people (like a man suffering from amnesia) without much of a past. [Winter 1939-40]

Some of us view with distrust a third term for a President whose eyes are so fixed upon Europe's high speed carnage that he cannot spare a glance at our own slow death. . . . Roosevelt has done some good things for this country but he is not doing them now. . . . As this is being written we as well as our President are once more on a stampede of the mental texture, the emotional quality of the 1938 Martian panic; of the brute power and carelessness of a horde of crazed cattle. There is something chilling and fantastic about the talk on streets; the copy in newspapers . . .

Some of us have followed David Cohn's writings with interest, for his is a voice from the Delta that has seemed sensitive and imaginative and warm. But his long review of Wright's *Native Son*, recently featured in the *Atlantic Monthly*, made trickles of shame run down your mind as you read. Why do we white southerners hug to ourselves the illusion that we are a gentle people and yet lash out implicitly and explicitly with caste prejudices of the toughness and crudity of raw-hide? Now *Native Son*, as profoundly stirring as it is, has its important faults and weaknesses. But they are faults which spring from a not wholly subtle and mature comprehension of the causations of human behavior, and a too eager desire to state a constellation of problems as one shooting star.

But . . . Richard Wright replies to David Cohn and his reply does not satisfy L. E. S., either. For over-simplification of a problem does not make it clearer; nor does a philosophy of class hatred and violence seem more desirable than racial hatred and violence. Cohn and Wright both have given us partial but distorted truths. [Spring 1940]

Lanterns on the Levee, a best-seller in southern states, is an anachronism with a highly rubbed patina. Those who enjoy surfaces without looking at substance can read this book without pain; those who wear the aura of racial superiority will ac-

knowledge with satisfaction the halo which the author has woven so delicately around his own head. Others will lift eyebrows at a tasteless though muted expression of white arrogance in an unhappy year when white men, if ever in their existence, should be bowed down with humility for the chaos they have brought upon themselves. Some, reading the book and pondering its immense popularity South and North, will grow sick at heart for the future of a people who can write and read with pleasure words which burn candles at the shrine of racial and class superiority at the very moment they are sending their sons to die for democracy and the brotherhood of man.

A book like this is more disturbing to L. E. S. than a Georgia demagogue's cheap tricks. It is easy for intelligent people to reject violent and vulgar expressions of race chauvinism; it seems more difficult for them to resist the seductive chanting of those same words if modulated and muted to a well-bred softness.

The 'lyrical longing to be a gentleman'—how it aches in the hearts of southerners! That it is a sham gentlemanliness we long for is no matter. . . . Driven by our insecurities, aching with unconscious and conscious fears and dreads and frustrations, we feverishly continue to blow ourselves up from miniature dimensions to the magnificent proportions of a super race and a super class.

It is a grotesque and comic thing. One could forget it in a great gust of sane and healthy laughter were it not so malevolent in its effects upon mankind. [Winter 1941]

Early in May, at the Spartanburg (S. C.) Music Festival, an important thing happened. . . . It caused no excitement and yet the premiere of *A Tree on the Plains* was an evening for the South to remember. *A Tree on the Plains* is an opera which springs out of the American folk spirit. It is of the pioneer folk and is itself a pioneer act. There are others who have worked this rich vein of course and to these *A Tree* is indebted: Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* . . . the WPA theatre and its exploratory experiments with the concerns of its people . . . Caldwell's folk cartoons . . . perhaps even in a tenuous way it owes something to Martha Graham's *Frontier*. Ernst Bacon's music is worth listening to, tuneful, simple, quite right for Paul Horgan's words; and

words and music are of the quality of the folk. There are a few bad spots of course; one tends to be enthusiastic perhaps as much because it is a new direction and a good one as because it has arrived somewhere.

It is difficult sometimes to remember that under the black screen which war has laid across our lives, here, there, are artists, writers, holding stubbornly to their task of creating out of their dreams that which gives meaning to the life the rest of us are clinging to. I am thinking now of that young Negro Jacob Lawrence, whose *And the Migrants Kept Coming* panels are an unforgettable experience to look upon. Done with simple directness . . . the panels tell the story of the Negro's migration from the South to the North. Three pictures from this series of sixty are reproduced on the following pages. [Spring 1942]

The American notion of the male as a kind of half-back-gentleman-cowboy-quick-on-the-draw must often have been a difficult role for little boys to live up to. One remembers how Lafcadio Hearn gave up the miserable business and fled to Japan where small stature, interest in books, flowers, and painting did not prohibit him from finding a woman who could deeply love him without feeling shame in her choice and where he could live with prestige the way of life that he believed in.

Margaret Mead has written in fascinating terms of the male and female concepts as she has found them in small, remote cultures [in *From the South Seas* and *Balinese Character*]. . . . No one can read Margaret Mead or Franz Alexander without having a lot of windows opened in his imagination. Sometimes, one wishes a few of our southern liberals who recently have been moaning so pitifully about the South's 'peculiar' and unchangeable way of life would take time off from their lamentations and read a few books on social anthropology and psychoanalysis, finishing their limbering up with Korzybski's *Science and Society* as a good rubdown. Too many of us southern folks once read Sumner's *Folkways* and made of it our Bible, proving by it that "southern folk cannot change." [Spring-Summer 1944]

Like insanity or childbirth or degenerative organic disease war seems unavoidable because human beings are naive in the art

and science of timing. It took man a long time to discover that today's child is the result of a brief, pleasurable moment, nine months ago. It took him—and her—a long time to bridge the gap between remote ecstasy and immediate labor pains. It is almost as difficult for us today to see in the catatonic schizoid, or the raving paranoid, the little child whose path to maturity was blocked by obstacles grown-ups rolled across it, forcing him to detour. It is the gaps in time that we find so hard to pull together. We have mastered space more successfully. Our imaginations encompass the globe with ease. But how many of us are able to travel backward forty, thirty, twenty, even ten years to the beginning of today's dilemma? Or to travel ahead and see the result of today's decision? This ability to swing through time, back and forth at will, is a skill most of us are curiously inept at.

. . . My amazement at being called a 'Trotskyite' by the Stalinists, when I think of myself as merely a civilized, fairly decent, fairly intelligent woman whose main interests in life are music, psychoanalysis, culture traps and the right use of words . . . Trying awfully hard to postpone that moment when you have to see the sawdust spilling out of your doll, knowing as you have known since you were five, that inevitably it spills.

[Winter 1944-45]

✻ The Harris Children's Town --Maxwell, Ga.²

This is an excerpt from an uncompleted novel and has itself been cut. Omissions are indicated by series of dots.) [Original Note.]

There are ten thousand other little towns of the size of Maxwell, Georgia, all very like Maxwell, all a little different but it happened that the Harris children were not born in any of these. They were born in Maxwell. And Maxwell was the warp on which the small patterns of their lives were woven. From which they could never cut themselves loose. Though some tried. Tried and found that they were only carrying Maxwell with them, wherever they went. As every child grown in a little town carries it forever with him until the threads rot and fall to dust.

Maxwell claimed a population of eighteen hundred, eight hundred whites, one thousand Negroes. The Harris children knew that. Knew too that cotton, lumber and turpentine made money for folks, or broke them—that people should have diversified crops, but didn't—that their papa was the busiest man in town and maybe the richest—

But these facts were less than the sand which slipped unnoticed into their shoes during the day and as carelessly was emptied out on the floor at night. For folks as they had heard all their short lives had to make money or lose it. Their papa did both so being the richest man in town—if he was—did not give them more or less spending money than their friends had. And Maxwell's eighteen hundred inhabitants were very simply people they said howdy to when they met them on the streets and they said howdy to every one of them, black and white, even though a face or name now and then might be unknown to them: because their papa did.

But out of the flux of Maxwell's eighteen hundred human beings swirling in little slow eddies on the business streets on

Saturday, about the Methodist and Baptist churches on Sunday, to and from school on week days, about the Woodmen of the World Hall, the Masonic Temple, the Knights of Pythias Hall on lodge night, out at the cemetery every week or so when there was a burying, on rare entertainment nights in the Opera House, at the baseball ground near the African Methodist Episcopal Church where a ball, eluding the outfielder, would crash into the Black God's ramshackly temple to the gasping delight of the White God's children—out of this fluid mass faces, and bodies, became three dimensional, solidified into sharp lines, and threw their shadows on the Harris' hearts.

Hardly more than the *shush* of long, gray moss across your face as you ran on the white sandy paths beneath great oaks, hardly more than the crunch of acorns under bare feet, or the prickle of sandspurs, or the feel of cold iron on blowy days when skates jamming into sand you fell breathing hard and laughing against the new metal fence put up after the old pickets had rotted down; hardly more, but there, to remain there forever, as moving in its slow orbit Maxwell swung from God's Sabbath to Nigger Sad'dy night, and gathering up its strength began anew.

Mr. Pusey, on Sunday the Methodist Sunday School superintendent, on week days manager of Maxwell Supply Store, at night the husband of a wife invalidated by "female trouble"—Mr. Pusey five feet one inch in his shoes and a trifle pudgy about the belt took charge Sunday morning as well as he could of the squirming hot, clean, murmurous youth (he called them youth) sent or accompanied by parents anxious that the by-product of their weak moments learn so much about God that they'd never get in jail, never be talked about, never be radical, always make a good living, and die a respectable death in such a respectable manner that whoever the minister might be at the time he could convince their bereaved, broken, desolated hearts in firm, comforting, unsailable words that their dead child was safe in the arms of Jesus. That is what they wanted. The children wanted to be close together, hear each other's voices, watch the grown folks and show off their knowledge—or their ignorance, as their mood might be—of the Golden Text.

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After the classes, small chronological clusters scattered about the pews and hovered over by pretty young school teachers who talked gravely about vague segments of old Jewish history, Mr. Pusey would strike hard the iron bell on his table and reassemble the disintegrated congregation to hear old Dr. Munson expound the lesson according to Josephus. Old Dr. Munson from the North, curly gray beard reaching far below his belt, walked stiffly down the middle aisle each Sunday morning, knees popping in and out as he walked, opened a heavy book and resumed with the mysterious words, "Now according to Josephus . . ." the running commentary he had been making all the years of the Harris children's lives on the Sunday School lesson. Only as the years passed his voice grew more quavery until sometimes you could not make out the words, and the book shook up and down in his hand until sometimes you could not tear your eyes from the shaking. They thought he looked exactly like God and they thought Josephus must too and it made it easier somehow for them to think of the Trinity when they thought of Dr. Munson, Josephus and God.

Only sometimes as they listened, they wondered what he did to Miss Ada when she ran wild-eyed and mumbling into the back door of his office in the drug store and (if you hung around the corner playing stick frog long enough) came out flushed and quiet and bright with happiness. Miss Ada, starey-eyed, black hair straggly-loose about her white face, biting and licking her fingers as if they were all-day suckers, laughing quick-like, as quick-like frowning, walking up and down back streets, her shirt waist on backward or a Mother Hubbard tied about her with a patent leather belt, walking, walking through Nigger Quarters, across the ball ground, sometimes in palmettos on the edge of the hammock, walking, walking, and then slipping into the back door of the drug store.

She lived in Old Town with her mother whom encroaching Nigger Quarters and ever enlarging cemetery could not drive into the newer Maxwell. If you walked about a bit after a burying reading old tombstones and wandered over to the West Side past the pauper lot where the thin edge of the swamp creeps up close to Maxwell—the hammock it is called, being dryer and higher here—you would see the old log house built by Miss Ada's great-

grandfather and you might see Miss Ada but you'd be sure to see Miss Ada's old, old mother sitting on the stoop, shut in by an ancient greenness of tall box hedge and moss covered board roof. Or you *might* meet Miss Ada face to face as you came around a tall tombstone and then, if you did, she would smile sweetly and laugh softly and you would laugh with her and suddenly you both would stop; and she would look through you and haughtily pick up the train of her white wedding gown and carefully pick her way among the crowded graves, while you watched her move statelily among tall marble tombstones, cool and dim under big oaks, through the gray mist of softly floating Spanish moss. They said he died of typhoid a day before the wedding and she had buried him on her wedding day twenty years ago—before you were born—but she would say differently if you dared ask her, and once you *had* dared, whispering as your eyes slid smoothly over yellowed satin but never quite reached her face, "Miss Ada, are you married?" and she half whispered back "Yes, dear . . . are you?"

Miss Ada never came to church, nor her old mother grown too feeble to walk the distance from Old Town to College Street where the churches were. But almost every one else came to church. Even Mr. Prentiss Reid, publisher of Maxwell's weekly newspaper and an infidel. He came to listen to the sermon in order to have something to argue about the next week, the Harris children's papa said, always adding "But Prentiss Reid is a superior man, a superior man" and mama would always answer "No man can be superior who does not believe in God."

On the first Sunday of the month old Opie Culpepper, syphilitic and mangy, uncombed gray hair dribbling down his neck, some of his sores bandaged, some left open "fer a breath of God's good air" he'd tell you out of swollen, cracked, pus-thickened lips, "ain't no need" he'd tell you "ter be ashamed of yer ailments when the good God gived 'em ter you"—on the first Sunday old Opie Culpepper took Holy Communion kneeling first at the altar rail, taking the first draught of the Lord's Blood out of the big silver cup which would in turn be offered all communicants, while the bowed congregation watched and tried not to see, tried

not to think, tried only to sing *Break Thou the Bread of Life*, tried only to beg of their God forgiveness for their manifold sins.

Among those who besides zealous old Opie responded to the first invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper were the prominent citizens: the school superintendent, the Board of Stewards of the church, the cashier of the Maxwell National Bank, and the newly converted. Whenever big, hulky, red-faced Gus Rainey, butcher and owner of the meat market, was newly converted he went up promptly, very simply kneeling next old Opie Culpepper—for never was a creature of God more humble than Big Gus after a conversion. Like a clumsy, overgrown yearling, he'd fall down beside the altar, his protuberant belly squeezed against the carved slender rails, knees on the raised carpeted ledge, bottomside of number 12 shoes blaring out in the faces of the children on the front pew, big bottom blaring out too, while he humbly mumbled vague penitences to God for His having made him the weak, forlorn, sinful creature he was. But he was not always there. There were the months each year when he sat on the back pew of the church wriggling around, pew creaking, until in utter confusion he would rise and tiptoe out of the church, often in his stupefied embarrassment running straight into the bell rope in the vestibule, causing a faint clang of the great bell above to shiver through the stillness of the service. And there were other months when he would not come near the church; sitting out in front of his market on Sundays, whittling, his big, red, chuffy face still set in its good nature but ready at one hopeful glance from a church member to sulk up; or hidden from the eyes of the town, sleeping off one of the jags for which a few months later at the annual revival the good God would have to forgive him . . .

"While these retire let others come" was the signal for the ladies of the congregation to move forward. A few men came then too, it is true, lukewarm members who went to be a good example to their families. But this second group was made up largely of the wives of the church officials, the Sunday School teachers and those good women who, while eager to repent of their transgressions felt that there was, after all, a ladylike way to do everything.

. . . .

The third invitation from the minister brought a rush of children who tried to walk slowly but fell against each other awkwardly, stung by the impact of a hundred pairs of grown-up eyes on their backs, and finally in a sudden huddle flopped down on the altar ledge.

On Sunday afternoon in Maxwell you walked down the railroad track where water lilies bloomed in late spring in the ponds and ditches on either side the embankment and violets grew in deep blue patches on the grassy slants and yellow jessamine filled the hammock with sweetness; or out to the cemetery where inscriptions were read again and again:

Born 1830—Died 1865

Born 1903—Died 1904

Born 1895—Died 1900

Born 1814—Died 1890

until death rang its slow bell in your heart and God seemed close, and eternity very near but none of it dreadful for you were young and no one you loved had ever died and old green moss on cool marble felt good to the touch and phlox blooming at your feet were pink-sweet and the laughter and talk of companions crisp and sure, and the sun was still bright and glimmery.

But when the three tall, magnificent monuments of the dead Harwell family had thrown thin shadows far across the tiny baby grave which had no headstone, only a mound of old dirt hardly longer or bigger than some of the toad-frog houses you had built when you were little, when shadows touched the poor little unknown baby's grave, it was time to walk back to College Street and home. The way you liked best to return wound between two old family grave lots. Twisted green-old iron fence ensquared crumbling brick tombs, falling apart until big gaping holes beckoned curious eyes and one by one bright sure voices hushed, you passed through ancient creaking gate and knelt beside the last feeble gesture at immortality of some one's dust, peering through dark vacancies, smelling dank moss, old lime and unsunned dirt but believing you smelt decayed flesh (half hoping you did). Here death laid bony fingers on young, warm shoulders and pressed cool pains to the heart. And suddenly the cemetery was a place of mystery and gloom and dry rot, heaven far away and

inaccessible, and only the familiar square of home on College Street held warmth and security and life.

It was not until the archway of the cemetery was left far behind and the African Methodist Episcopal Church was near where good pungent earthy living Negro odor drove away the smell of death that hearts beat young again. Thick, musky body odor mixed with musky Hoyt's German cologne, gay laughter, wiggling black bodies of young girls dressed in white folks' castoff finery, nuzzling against big, black, flashy bucks fresh from the turpentine stills. They had a way, these bright-faced, high-smelling couples of pushing you off the sidewalk. Laughing hard, avoiding your eyes, they would walk straight ahead, as though through you, giving in not an inch to your physical presence, until with a sudden nudge of turpentine-hardened muscle you were off and walking in deep sand. You knew in a muddled way that this made up to the wenches for wearing your big sister's cast-off dresses or some other white girl's dresses, but it made you mad, and once mad, life grew immediate and real . . .

Bright, like striped stick candy they looked, gathered in little clusters in front of the old ramshackly A. M. E. Church or coupled off, walking with Sunday arrogance up and down the sidewalk. On Monday they would be once more quiet, respectful laborers and as laborers comprehensible and well-liked but now, maddened at the insult of being pushed into sandspurs, an insult you knew well was intended for your white color and not a personal you, you felt Them as you felt Them in the thick, black mobs on Saturday nights down town where you never went if you were a Harris girl, or any other nice white Maxwell girl, unattended by an adult white male. There threading your way through the black strong-smelling mass of flesh and bone and muscle clothed in blue overalls worn alike by mill hands, cotton hands, turpentine hands, you knew that unnamed always untalked-about fear of the Negro . . .

Fifty blacks to one white, they were on Saturday nights, when all the cotton hands had come in from the farms, scrouging each other, laughing loud, talking big, sometimes silent, sometimes shy when picking out a piece of calico fur de ol' 'oman, showing gold teeth (the dandies), buying tight, new shoes that they'd slit across the top next day to make room for crowded toes, buying

pink suspenders, buying a little candy, buying a little snuff, a little flour, a little likker, handing over to white men in stores all the money other white men had given them for a long week's labor.

Later in the night there would be razor fights and by Sunday morning the calaboose would be full . . . some nigger gal's throat would likely be slit from ear to ear, or a buck knifed to the heart. But that, unless it happened to be your family's house girl or cook or your washwoman's daughter, you would hear little about—or nothing. Only after the sun had gone down beyond the Great Swamp did the streets of Maxwell turn full black, when the saw mill shut down, when the logging teams loaded with men came in from the camps, when the turpentine hands, grayed and smeared with rosin and pitch, walked the four miles in or rode the big mules, and field hands in wobbly wheeled wagons lighted by pitch torches came through twisting sand ruts from faraway shanties . . . Then the white race, save for the vendors and the keepers of the peace, quietly disappeared. It was nigger night. It was Sad'dy . . . And the streets were theirs.

Eighteen hundred people moving in a small town procession and you knew them all by name, or most of them. Some you saw buried, heard the dull hollow *plunk* of a fresh smelling clod of dirt dropped on the coffin lowered already in the hole. *Dust to dust* . . . you heard the minister say gravely and always the bereaved family caught their breath in quite audible sobs at this betrayal of immortality and always your heart was caught too in a strangling age-second of misery, a little for the dust in that new spaded hole but mostly for that clear, empty knowledge of the end to all things . . . so soon again to be forgotten. Some you saw so fresh-born that shame surged through you at the sheer ugliness of birth and in your embarrassment your tongue thickened so that your words to the exhausted prideful mother were inaudible and you were glad when her smile released you and you could run from the room . . .

And as Maxwell moved in its swinging orbit from God to money, dying, giving birth, marrying, laughing, hating, drinking, fornicating (only that word the Harris children knew to be a Bible word and one not used by real people, though they often

wondered what word real people did use if they used one, knowing only the short words scrawled on the school privy), the Harris children ran here and there, watching, listening, touching, smelling, drawing in great draughts of life, unknowing that they drank. [Spring 1936]

✿ One More Sigh for the Good Old South

GONE WITH THE WIND, by Margaret Mitchell, Macmillan Co. \$3.00.

Because of the author's unsure psychological grasp of character and limited historical perspective the 1037 pages of Scarlett's amorous and monetary adventures seem to this reviewer in their essence hardly more than a sentimental effusion enameled with box-office candor and debunking bluster. Regretfully it is said, for we too had long looked for the "great novel of the South" and had hoped that this was it. It isn't.

The book of course has numerous surface merits: written in a nervous vivacious colloquial manner it swings the reader along at a rapid and effortless pace—its plot concocted of the new and old stock-in-trade of melodrama (murder, attempted rape, childbirth with all details, deaths, passionate and not so passionate love scenes, flights from danger) laid against a background clear-cut in its authentic detail, of war, Ku Klux activities, Carpet-bagger regime, has all of its strings with their little beads of suspense tied neatly and skillfully—the whole overlaid with witty comments and a gruff humor which stiffens up the sentimentality. Miss Mitchell's sense of comedy is strong and she handles deftly those scenes where it predominates—in sharp contrast to the woodenness of her "emotional" passages. Her knowledge of the Civil War-Reconstruction period is admirable and so precise and comprehensive is her acquaintance with the customs of the time and the scenes of that early, young Atlanta that she achieves an atmosphere of contemporaneity (despite hoop skirts and stays) which is in the nature of a *tour de force*.

Yet as a whole the book wobbles badly like an enormous house on very shaky underpinnings. For although Miss Mitchell's knowledge of the period from 1850–75 is adequate she does not seem to possess the understanding of distant historical back-

grounds and social origins necessary for grasping and evaluating the complexities inherent in the period and its people. Too often she seems to be one with her characters in accepting and acting upon premises which, however valid they once seemed to people of a certain narrow culture (albeit a gracious and in spots pleasant one) surely now we can hold no longer important. As we protest the interpretation of our American life today solely in terms of Capitalistic (or of Marxist) ideology so we protest the interpretation, however unconscious, of Southern life seventy years ago in nostalgic terms of old Planter-ideology. An artist comprehends the social-economic-intellectual assumptions of a period, their implications and effect upon personality but surely he must remain detached and critical of them. Just as it would be difficult for most of us today, when half the world is starving or killing or preparing to kill each other and many of the other half tangled up despairingly in their own emotional problems, to take seriously the feuds, conventions, snobbery and ambitions of Atlanta's Society Set (or any other town's) so it is difficult for us to read without boredom of the trivial social snobbery of the Atlanta of Reconstruction Days. Yet the author gives us the impression that she, despite her laughter, thinks it somehow important. Perhaps inadvertently. Perhaps it is a fault of method rather than assumption, due to a vacillation between the satirical and sympathetic attitudes. Consistent satire might have avoided the appearance of straddling the fence—and turned into a comedy of manners, against a legitimately exciting background, what so often edges on sentimental twaddle.

As wavering as her comprehension of historical realities is her understanding of the inner life of her characters. To attempt the creation of character, the probing of personality without recognizing and comprehending the dynamic force of the unconscious as it plays upon and determines so powerfully the external manifestations of personality is, frankly, to be naive. Whether we wish it or no, the findings of Freud and his followers have not only made for us enormous extensions of knowledge in the realms of the spirit but by their very nature are changing the intrinsic quality of that spirit. . . . While there have been from time to time since the existence of novelists and poets rare individuals who could penetrate the depths of the soul with intuitive, profound

insight without the assistance of Freud, most past writers have been impoverished by the lack of the knowledge he has given us and its point of view; for contemporary writers it is very simply a *sine qua non*. And Miss Mitchell is no exception. The absence of this subtle and sensitive comprehension of the motives and feelings of her characters places her work on the level of slick, successful but essentially mediocre fiction; and no amount of high spirits, "God's nightgowns," and witty comments (entertaining as they undoubtedly are) can compensate in the opinion of this reviewer for the lack. But perhaps we are treating too seriously a book which has no claim surely on literature but is rather a curious puffball compounded of printer's ink and bated breath, rolled in sugary sentimentality, stuck full of spicy Southern taboos, intended for and getting mass consumption. Harmless enough. Unless it has done what its publishers claim—"set a brand new standard for fiction." *That* we should be inclined to take seriously. [Fall 1936]

‡ Along Their Way*

In the mellow year of 1891 when tender-hearted Americans choked up over *Little Boy Blue*, batted moist eyes at the cadences of *An Old Sweetheart of Mine*, and lynched two hundred and fifty citizens mostly Negroes, male and female, there lived in Dayton, Ohio, a young boy who had composed the song for the graduating class of Central High School. Paul was the only Negro in the class. He was president of the Philomathean Literary Society and editor of *The High School Times*. He admired the song he had composed, the other members of the class admired it, and many people in the audience thought it remarkable. It began thus:

*Why stirs with sad alarm the heart
For all who meet must some day part?
So let no useless cavil be;
True wisdom bows to God's decree.*

There were seven more verses like this one, or practically like it.

Paul Laurence Dunbar had begun his literary career and although it was destined to follow the spongy path of the Heart Throbbers which Eugene Field and James Whitcomb Riley were rapidly widening into a highway broad enough for all democracy to travel in comfort, it was not to be an easy way for him. For Paul was a Negro. This fact confronted him with its usual firmness. He gave up his cherished plan for a college education and took a job at four bucks a week as an elevator boy. He continued to write verse, continued to send it away to magazines. And after a time bits of it began to be published here and there. In 1893, with the help of a physician of Dayton, his first book *Oak and Ivy* was printed. It was a little thing, crude in format, containing

* *A Long Way from Home*. By Claude McKay. Lee Furman. \$2.50.
Paul Laurence Dunbar. By Benjamin Brawley. Univ. of N. C. Press. \$1.00.
[Original Note.]

verse no better, but no worse, than that of his contemporaries, Frank Stanton and Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

Down in Georgia, Governor Atkinson had shocked several million southerners by making his sportsmanlike suggestion that prisoners be unshackled from handcuffs and permitted to defend their own lives if sheriffs were unable, as so many snivelled they were, to protect them. Such realism was too coarse for the stomachs of people nourished on *Mighty Lak A Rose*, *Over the Hill to the Poorhouse*, and two hundred and fifty lynchings a year—and they turned away from it in nauseous disgust. What Paul Laurence Dunbar thought of it, we do not know. What he thought of his race's misery, we cannot discover from his verses. His biographer declares his sympathy and he is doubtless right. But Dunbar was a singer, a maker of pleasant rhymes, an artificer working in the materials of those everyday surface experiences which euphemize the word 'human.' Simple, sincere, not troubled by intellectual complexities, Dunbar sang his songs; and singing, quietly unloosed the handcuffs of white skepticism which, more than white hate, had locked his race so desperately fast to their American heritage.

For Dunbar was not only a Negro; he was black. Black, pure African—and yet he could sing. No better—and that was fortunate for his race for there would have been few ears to hear in the last decade of the 19th century—but no worse than the white singers of the period. There had of course been others. Since Jupiter Hammon's *An Evening Thought, Salvation by Christ With Penitential Cries* appeared in 1760 and little prim, pedantic Phillis Wheatley's first volume was published in 1773, there had been no less than thirty-odd Negroes who had published volumes of verse, none of which had been widely read. But now America was listening. The Negro race had found its poet.

In 1895 courageous Frederick Douglass died, ingratiating Booker T. Washington made his famous Atlanta speech, and Dunbar published his second volume of poems called *Majors and Minors*.

If one will look closely at the soul of that decade, raw and bleeding with its 1800 lynchings and the most bitter labor exploitation this country had known, obscene in its greed for more and more riches and power, and then turn aside and touch the lavender and old lace of its sentiments, one can read *When*

Malindy Sings and *When the Co'n pone's* hot and not censure too harshly a young Negro poet who could not, despite talent, rise above the silly drool of the times and its white leaders.

The day had not come for honest words.

But there were in Atlanta even then three Negroes who later were to speak clearly to their own race. Dr. Burghardt DuBois was teaching in Atlanta University and writing that poignant book *The Souls of Black Folk* which later challenged black and white with its bitter, heart-breaking candor; James Weldon Johnson was completing his studies at the same school before beginning a career phenomenal in its success of ragtime writer, collector of Negro Spirituals, U. S. consul to Nicaragua, writer of many books among them the beautiful *God's Trombones* and that thoughtful and provocative address, *Negro Americans: What Now?*; Walter White, a small child then, was drawing into himself those impressions which were later to give him the courage to risk his life many times while investigating and publicizing scores of lynchings.

But the time was not ready as young white Theodore Dreiser was discovering and it was perhaps well for the black race that Dunbar preferred to write of co'n pones and courtin'.

He died of tuberculosis in February 1906, having published many books of verse, several novels and numerous essays in the magazines of the period.

Because I have loved so vainly,
And sung with such faltering breath,
The Master in infinite mercy
Offers the boon of death. . .

Hardly had these words faded from America's ears than there pounded like iron strokes of a bell of mourning, piercing the heart, the stark anguished cry of *The Litany of Atlanta*:

"... Bewildered we are, and passion-tost, mad with the madness of a mobbed and murdered people; straining at the armposts of Thy throne, we raise our shackled hands and charge Thee, God, by the bones of our stolen fathers, by the tears of our dead mothers, by the very blood of Thy crucified Christ: *What meaneth this?* Tell us the Plan; give us the Sign!

Keep not thou silence, O God! Sit no longer blind, Lord God, deaf to

our prayer and dumb to our dumb suffering. Surely Thou too art not white, O Lord, a pale, bloodless, heartless thing!

Ah! Christ of all the Pities!

Forgive the thought! Forgive these wild, blasphemous words. Thou art still the God of our black fathers, and in Thy soul's soul sit some soft darkenings of the evening, some shadowings of the velvet night. . . . "

With passion and dignity, no longer simulating the grin of a clown to please 'white folks' or the humility and meekness white Christians demanded of black, *The Litany* bravely rang in a new period for Negroes. Dunbar had quietly unlocked the handcuffs, DuBois gave the courage to live.

The old-timey Negro was dead; long live the new. There was a quickening of blood in Negro veins, new energy, fresh hope, versatility of talent, exuberance of spirits. And there began movements as diverse in results as the Negro theater activity flowering in such artist-comedians as Bert Williams, Bob Cole, Rosamond Johnson . . . and later such serious actors as Paul Robeson, Richard B. Harrison . . . a succession of musical shows which reached their peak in the 1920's . . . the quick fame of the Fisk Singers . . . numerous collections of spirituals and work songs . . . the Memphis Blues and, long after, its child 'Swing' . . . the Urban League and its magazine *Opportunity* . . . in 1910, the magazine *Crisis* which so quickly acquired a nation-wide circulation . . . the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In 1912 was published James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, a novel revolutionary in its frankness but rarely read by whites until it was re-issued in 1927.

And all this time Negroes were moving into Harlem. . . .

Into this ferment of progress, hope, fear, came a Negro from Jamaica, very eager and very black. Claude McKay had published a slim volume of poems *Songs from Jamaica*. They had been reviewed in the West Indies, in England, France, Germany, but America had not noticed. McKay wanted to find his American audience and, very simply, came to it. Two years he studied at Kansas State University, a short period at Tuskegee and then went out and met America face to face, as a laborer. Longshoreman, Pullman dining-car waiter, butler in tails . . . McKay took

his jobs in his stride, made friends white and black, a few enemies, loved, listened, played, laughed, wrote poetry.

He begins his autobiography with an amusing account of a meeting with Frank Harris in 1918 and in few pages with admirable selection gives a deft portrait of 'the great editor.' There follow in quick succession sketches of Max Eastman, his sister Crystal, Floyd Dell, days on *The Liberator*, the publication in it of the sonnet "If We Must Die" which was reprinted in every Negro paper in America, recited from Negro pulpits and taught to Negro children. Those words:

If we must die—let it not be like hogs

Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot . . .

stirred American Negroes as they had never been stirred before.

In time the book covers that most interesting and active period of Negro achievement known as the Negro renaissance. But while James Weldon Johnson calls McKay a leader of it, McKay, perhaps modestly, says he has had little or no part in it. He has consistently refused to be a 'race man' though uncompromising and fearless in his pride of race; refused to be a Communist though in sympathy with workers; refused to be a reformer; he is, he says with disarming simplicity, a poet.

Such heresy the Communists and propagandists spue out of their mouths. You must go the whole hog or not a squeal. Eugene Gordon declares writers like Fauset, DuBois, James W. Johnson worked only for special rights for themselves . . . Eugene Clay says there is a great need for Negroes to grow "more revolutionary" and brightly proceeds to discount the work of DuBois and B. T. Washington. . . . He says Langston Hughes has taken a 'decisive step to the left.' His works from 1926-1931 were 'linked in his evolution with only occasional retrogressions.' One re-reads the beautiful "I have known rivers" and that lovely little lyric "De railroad bridge's/A sad song in de air" and gives thanks for the retrogressions of our poets.

Young Langston Hughes, influenced surely by McKay, once said, "We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it does not matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom

tom cries and the tom tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter . . ." But recently he has said ". . . Negroes should be writing to expose racial discrimination and evils . . . join with white workers . . ."

At all this orthodoxy McKay laughs a big black laugh and goes on his way.

His first novel *Home to Harlem* (1928), attacked by self-conscious members of his race who believe—and one can understand their reasons—that only admirable, intelligent Negro characters should be put in novels, is an interesting, honest book, and perhaps the most widely read of novels written by Negroes during the past fifteen years. In sensuous imagery it is excelled by Jean Toomer's *Cane*, a book which fits no category; in movement and vitality, by none. Jessie Fauset's novels are more analytical, are as sensitive, as intelligent (McKay calls them 'little primroses') but lack its power. Zora Neale Hurston's are richer with folklore but stiff, and somehow unmoving. Rudolph Fisher is as detached, as honest; John Matheus is more versatile and has superior technical brilliance. But none of these has had the influence or gained the audience which is McKay's.

The truth is, there has not yet come from the Negro race a first class novel. Honest ones, yes, and colorful and dealing with intrinsically interesting material, but lacking power of characterization, perspective, beauty of prose. They have done better with their autobiographies. *A Long Way from Home* is more personal, more colorful than James W. Johnson's *Along This Way* but lacks the close touch with Negro movements and the Negro intelligentsia which gave Johnson's book its interest and value. McKay is a more ingratiating writer, achieving the miracle of talking continuously about himself without seeming to; and he touches penetratingly upon people and movements in Europe and America which are worth reading about.

In its exuberant candor the book is sharply contrasted with Benjamin Brawley's biography of Dunbar. Mr. Brawley has done a plodding, unimaginative job with his study. One sniffs the faint odor of an obituary. It is a pity. Surely the first Negro in America to be acclaimed with nation-wide enthusiasm as a poet deserves franker treatment. While one suspects that Dunbar's mind was as conventional as his verses, one is certain the man's life digressed

from beaten paths. Perhaps this little book was indeed just a 'job' for Mr. Brawley between more important works; he can write well when he is interested, as he has often proved. [Spring 1937]

✿ [Two Reviews]

THE NEGRO AND HIS MUSIC. By Alain Locke. Associates in Negro Folk Education, Washington, D. C. 25c.

ROLLING ALONG IN SONG. By Rosamond Johnson. Viking Press, New York, \$3.50.

The Associates in Negro Folk Education is a project which has grown out of the interesting experiments in adult education among Negro groups in Atlanta and Harlem. The Bronze Booklet series represents the Negro's own view of his history, his art, music, literature, and social problems and is being written by competent Negroes, specializing in the various fields.

With admirable compression Dr. Alain Locke in *The Negro and His Music* gives a clear and at times dramatic picture of Negro music from its African origins to the symphonic complexities of *Kykunkor*: tracing it step by step through its vicissitudes as plantation music patronizingly listened to from the "big porch," the exploitation and popularization by Stephen Foster (which Mr. Locke likens to what Joel Chandler Harris did for Negro folk stories), its rambunctious period of minstrelsy, Fisk University's dramatic presentation of the Sorrow Songs to the world, on through its well-known Negroid period of rag-time, blues, jazz to its present-day status as the most important single influence in modern music and the modern dance. It is an exciting story and well worth one's reading. That it has something of the encyclopaedic or textbook quality is due perhaps to the necessity of compressing so many and various facts within the compass of 142 pages. It has a definitive reference list of books, magazine articles, and phonograph records and will be invaluable to the serious student of Negro music for this reason as well as for its comprehensive account of the interacting influences this most beautiful of all folk music and American life have had upon each other.

Far more briefly Rosamond Johnson covers the same period in

the foreword to *Rolling Along*, a collection of 87 songs which are a thin but comprehensive sampling of Negro music. Beginning with the ring shout "Sit Down Sister Sit Down" (the rhythm of which is identical with that of an African tribal rhythm), we are given spirituals, jubilees, plantation ballads (and he includes here songs written by whites as well as blacks), plantation and levee pastimes, minstrel, jail-house, work songs; street cries, rag-time, blues, "De Chain Gang"—a musical episode written by Mr. Johnson but based on traditional Negro idioms—and an excerpt from Gershwin's folk-opera *Porgy and Bess*. There are many songs here which cannot be found in other collections and it is a book which anyone interested in Negro music will want to own. Mr. Johnson and his brother, James Weldon Johnson, also have collected 120 Negro spirituals published some years ago by Viking Press. Americans are heavily indebted to these two brothers who have with persistence and musical sensitiveness contributed much toward making the world aware of the musical riches embedded in what some people still call "the white man's burden." [Summer 1937]

✻ Wisdom Crieth in the Streets...

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION. By J. G. Randall. D. C. Heath Co. \$4.50.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, An Interpretation. By Carl Russell Fish. Longmans Green. \$3.75.

THE ROAD TO REUNION. By Paul Buck. Little, Brown & Co. \$3.50.

RECONSTRUCTION, The Battle for Democracy. By James Allen. International Pub. \$2.00.

As Vernon Parrington has said, the history of the United States can with rough accuracy be described as a struggle between the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. But in the political exigencies of a two-party system such clean-cut fundamental issues as property rights versus human rights or the supremacy of the Constitution over human welfare seldom appear so properly and conveniently labelled. They are far more likely to wear masks of such ambiguity that recognition is a difficult and tedious business for even the best of us. For most of us it seems impossible.

The reading of these four interesting books therefore may depress whatever faith you still have in the ability of human beings as social or political groups to attain to a minimal clarity in their thought processes. For not only in the crisis of the Civil War and Reconstruction did we Americans show a singular ineptitude for facing issues realistically but in every political and economic crisis of our history we have followed a curious pattern consistent in its muddle-headedness. Perhaps it can be blamed on semantics as Stuart Chase entertainingly tells us in a recent issue of *Harper's*. We can smile at this new way to salvation but his suggestion that man's dilemmas can be traced to a brash urge to use words and an elephantine clumsiness in using them penetrates too near the truth to be laughed off. *The Death Masque of Mean-*

ingless Words might well sub-title the four histories listed above. For while "democracy" and "liberty" for a hundred and fifty years have been playing the leading roles in this American Tragi-Comedy of Errors and, between them, have produced as fine a run of national follies as could well be imagined, none of these has attained the all-time high of the hideous act put on between 1854-74. Unless we are at present rehearsing its successor.

Slave owner, abolitionist, northern financier, Western free-soiler, freedman strutted their uneasy parts behind identical masks and mouthed clamorous and often identical words to an audience whose confusion would be the cause of cynical amusement were it not for the knowledge that it later paid for this show with its blood—and with a tragic entailment of poverty and hate and bitterness which no one of us is untouched by today. While four million blacks sat up in the gallery uneasily wondering why they were not in the wings listening for *their* cue.

A blindness to the economic realism of the struggle, a lack of grasp of fundamentals of political science—we Americans have never been good political philosophers—a histrionic preoccupation with emotion-loaded words: "freedom," "democracy," "states' rights," "union," turned what a fair-minded person can hardly label other than a dog fight for the bone of economic power into a holy war.

Waving the Stars and Stripes of the Republic and ignoring as much as possible the blessing given by zealous abolitionists the Union boys marched off to war. But it was a long way to the Deep South. And the road was rough going. The Stars and Stripes lost a little of their brightness and "unionism" did not roll so easily on parched tongues. So, by one of those sleights of hand which only priests and politicians are masters of, there appeared before them an ark of the covenant bearing the Lord's testimony of "freedom for slaves" and suddenly God was on their side. With all eyes blinded by this holy light it was fairly easy for the Republican party to let such camp followers as bounty scandals, war-substitutes, riots against Negroes in New York, the steals of such men as Jay Cooke tag behind the procession unnoticed. In the South it was simpler. The words "states' rights" quickly acquired a divine afflatus which perhaps has never been paralleled save by Hitler's "Aryans" and the white race scrambled to its seat

on the right hand of God with a complacency matched only by the Nazis today. And men North and South died for words of vague, nebulous, variant meanings while women waited in anguish for an end to days of wrath which seemed without beginning or end. The few understood as the few always do. But in the confusion and babel of tongues they were silenced, rendered inert by the sheer weight of their understanding.

In recent years historians, as well as novelists, have been busy revising the orthodox pap which we consumed in our youth as the only 'true version' of the War; and have industriously issued monographs, special studies, biographies, pleasantly free from sectional recrimination. Indeed, we have had the privilege of witnessing the North embrace with a great sob of pity the South while the two mingled tears in a kind of ante-bellum love feast—a social phenomenon which probably reached its climax last year leaving us about where we were save for the worries of Miss Mitchell and Macmillan over their income taxes. That this reunion in Dixie has not aroused quite as much enthusiasm in us as Mr. Paul Buck feels is due to too many factors to be analyzed here. Let us say only briefly that we prefer the cruelest analysis to self-pity, we prefer to understand rather than forgive and be forgiven; in spite of our love for our southern climate, scenery and gentle manners, our undaunted hopes for the South's future, we cannot forget that historians and sociologists find our heterogeneity made homogenous largely by our racial fear and hate (the tie that binds looks too much like a rope with a noose at one end); and we cannot therefore take much comfort in our northern neighbors' approval.

This may explain our somewhat tempered appreciation of Professor Randall's evident tenderness toward the South in his admirably written history. Scrupulous and skilled in his methods, piling detail upon detail, incident upon incident, he builds up a gigantic mass of facts. You know that you have here the results of the siftings of a patient researcher who has read and evaluated literally hundreds of books, newspapers, unpublished manuscripts, letters, diaries, monographs, official documents covering every facet of the War and Reconstruction that his mind could envisage. The emphasis he has placed on the slave-owning non-

seceding border states with their white population exceeding that of the Confederacy brings into dramatic relief the conflicting interests of North and South, the complexities and anomalies which make generalizations concerning this war so peculiarly hazardous. His scrutiny of war politics, war finance, the unrest in the cities, methods of building armies quickly, the European view of the struggle, the constitutional aspects of Lincoln's administration, propaganda methods, censorship, the Radical cabinet's military blunders, naval operations, and his dexterous study of the effect of military campaigns on the psychology of 'the people' and hence of the governments (perhaps the best part of the book) serve to give a chilling contemporaneity to these 959 pages of history covering a period 70 years behind us.

One is persuaded that Mr. Randall has attempted an impartial survey of 'the facts.' But in his effort to be fair, he has apparently deemed it necessary to exclude conscious philosophical assumptions in order to maintain a scientific detachment toward his material. But how can truth be found save by testing hypotheses? Without a point of view how is one to evaluate facts? I am no historian; I only read history—and therefore lay myself open to the charge of presumption in daring to question a historian's methods. But history after all is written to be read by ordinary people and as one of these, as one of the intended consumers for whom this product was put on the market, I suggest that there would have been far less unconscious bias in this book had there been more conscious social philosophy. Incident piled upon incident, detail upon detail into a great mass, without the architectonics which a social philosophy would have given it, [is] but a mass that nevertheless leans. It seems a pity that Professor Randall is so chary of the implications of economic determinism, so willing to turn away from the interesting light which Turner's theory of the frontier sheds on this period and apparently so reluctant to follow back to their 18th century roots, as did Vernon Parrington with such fruitful results in his unsurpassed *Main Currents of American Thought*, those fundamental and conflicting ideas which by 1850 had grown into a tangle of slogans, catchwords and muddled passions. Instead he busies himself with an adjudication of the surface merits of the "two sides." Matching

sectional sin against sectional sin may be a nice game for elderly ladies of the U. D. C. to play, but it seems singularly inadequate technic for interpreting one of the world's greatest tragedies to minds eager to understand in order to avoid a worse tragedy.

And in spite of an absence of explicit social philosophy (he says "it remains for the social philosopher to draw the moral and to comment on causes and slogans") there is implicit—how could it be otherwise—in his evaluations a philosophy which seems to lean toward Constitutionalism, the sanctity of the Supreme Court, property rights rather than human rights, toward a "civilized" aristocracy rather than a sweaty equalitarianism, toward a "superior" white race rather than a black "menace," toward an oligarchy of wealth and "gentlemen" rather than a rule of the people. Thus is explained perhaps his tendency throughout the book to ignore human rights of the Negro and the Negro's role in Reconstruction, to ignore the white lower class and middle class in the old South, to make the abolitionists seem a hideous lot of fanatics and criminals, to appraise such men as Wendell Phillips as dangerous to American life, to minimize the evils and extent of absentee landlordism in the old slavocracy. Yet, after discounting what appears to be a strong personal bias, one admits gladly that he has done a good job and has given us perhaps the most comprehensive account of the Civil War that has been written in recent years.

The late Carl Russell Fish in *The American Civil War* has written a book more genuinely democratic in its implications, richer in humor, more subtle in its understanding of human motives, and extremely readable. Less descriptive than interpretative in his methods he subjects almost the identical aspects of the struggle which Professor Randall assembled so expertly to a kindly but realistic scrutiny and then with percipient skill pushes back of them to the past, thus orienting the present as a rational outgrowth of the past—yet never quite reaching back to fundamental principles. His chapter on the origin and early growth of the Republican party is of unusual excellence and his portrait of Lincoln achieves realism and yet retains sympathetic understanding, as do his sketches of the Radicals. His analyses of war politics and the cabinet seem less incisive, less realistic

than Randall's. Here his temperamental good-nature handicaps him. Professor Fish shares Paul Buck's conciliatory attitude toward the white people of the two sections. Both men write with tact, urbanity, and little profundity.

There is an atmosphere of a good old-fashioned Methodist altar service about *The Road to Reunion*. I found myself thinking as I read it of the 'reconciliations' I witnessed as a small child in our annual revival meetings. Even then a skepticism bit at my mind as persistently as the mosquitoes under the bench nipped at my legs. I would have liked to believe in the authenticity of those peace-makings done with such becoming humbleness before the eyes of gaping gossipy neighbors—but always it seemed to me that the protestant had one eye cocked on Heaven and a palm curved in the age-old 'gimme' gesture toward the throne of the Most High while the other clasped none too permanently his enemy's hand. And I learned then that people will eat humble pie gladly if the meringue is thick enough. There was plenty of meringue to go around in the 70's, 80's, 90's.

Parrington has called these three decades the Great Barbecue. North, South and West joined in a greedy feast on the public domain, grabbing land, draining the nation's natural resources of forests, coal, iron, oil as they would in the 20th century "unite" to grab its water power. "Progressive" southerners went North or West or urged northern capital to come south. The North found the South as eager to exploit free labor as it was, both of them discovering almost simultaneously how much richer a vein they had struck than the old.

Yet in spite of an undue enthusiasm and a good bit of *post hoc ergo propter hoc* reasoning this book has merit. It is readable, the spirit of its author is often rather likeable and it throws considerable light, if sometimes unintentionally, on the mind of the South—and the North. I should think however that an intelligent Negro reading it would not share the author's bubbling pleasure in 'the miracle' of reunion for from his vantage point the miracle must seem curiously like a bad conjure done on him. (What Negro can ever forget that one decade of this era of good feeling which produces Mr. Buck's lyricism also produced 1,035 lynchings of black men?) Neither, I should think, would white tenant

farmers and mill workers feel especially enthusiastic. But the 'better people' North and South, with not enough exceptions to hurt the book's sales, will like it.

I admit that I grow peevish: three serious books written by historians, all careful students, about one of the most dramatic and heart-breaking struggles in all history, whose very core is the Negro, and yet it is as if they were too color blind—dazzled as we all are from gazing too long and too unblinkingly at the garish light of White Superiority—to see the black man, still with his hat in hand, waiting for his long over-due recognition.

So we turn for relief to a book by a Negro about the Negro in Reconstruction and what do we find? Not so detailed an account as Dr. Dubois's *Black Reconstruction*, nor so understanding. At first glance it seems to be another Gospel According to St. Marx. Essentially it is that. And not caring for gospels this reader found herself as always squirming uneasily in the presence of orthodoxy. But after two chapters, Mr. Allen forgets his dialectics in a genuine absorption in the drama of the Negro as a human being and by following him through this nightmare of racial folly focuses our attention, as it should be focused, on the four million who were freed for one brief ecstatic moment only to feel again the old shackles snap back against their flesh. Using largely secondary sources, unearthing few if any new facts, relying on 'radical' writers of the period, Mr. Allen from the point of view of a Marxian looks the Reconstruction over. Undoubtedly he sees what he wants to see. But so do those historians of more conservative bent. An interesting study could be made just here of the varied interpretations given the writings of Carl Schurz (that German liberal who observed at first hand so much of the Civil War period) and the strange uses to which these interpretations have been put by historians—conservative, liberal, radical—all in the name of 'truth.'

Yet, in spite of the strictures, if you are interested in analyzing for yourself not only the minds of historians but those of 'the people' and especially the politicians in national crises I can suggest no more stimulating approach than the reading of these four histories in the order named. [Fall 1937]

✻ [Reminiscences of China]

He That Is Without Sin...

On the afternoon of Saturday, May 30, 1925, we sat in a boat on a canal in Chekiang province and talked of China. My companion who had lived many years in the interior was explaining to me—a novice of three years' residence—the origins of the intense and then wide-spread anti-British feeling.

And as she talked I listened, but only politely, for my thoughts were of Chinese friends from whom I had parted that morning, and my eyes were lingering in reluctance to leave forever the countryside through which the small boat pushed so slowly.

"The first open hostility," she was saying, "was in 1839 over opium which the British against the laws of China persisted in selling. The Chinese lost that war. Another followed in 1856. From these two wars the British gained a big slice of China: Hongkong, extraterritoriality, concessions, fourteen open ports, 'most favored nation' treaties, legalized opium, access to the Yangtze river, special indulgences for missionaries, indemnities."

The train of boats crept slowly under an old arched bridge, paused in a narrow village canal edged with shops and homes where the elders sipped tea from beautiful fragile bowls and beggars whined for alms and young girls with thin arched brows peeked through embroidered curtains of sedan chairs.

"A nice haul. They get what they want, these British." Smells of fried food, and *tsai*, and bean-curd and incense slipped from the street above us to the boat. Nearby a man gravely sat on a big toilet pot, his silken gown gathered carefully about his hips.

"Usually. In 1895 the Japanese succeeded at last in wresting Korea from China. They had had their eye on the little peninsula from the 16th century but had made no attempt since that time to invade it. In the 60's and 70's however Japan went modern,

reorganized her entire country, resources, habits, and girding up her modernity plunged into Western aggressiveness, found that she liked it, and snatched Korea away from China. Now China had no real claim on Korea, save an anomalous suzerainty which she had established over the unwilling Koreans and had no intention of handing to Japan, unless forced to. Japan easily and quickly defeated her. To save Peking Li Hung Chang signed a treaty which gave the Japanese about all they could think to ask for including 200,000,000 taels in indemnity. That was the bankers' cue to appear on the stage. They came, British, French, German, each wanting his share of the loans which China was forced to make in order to pay this 'debt' to Japan."

The boat moved on. A wayside shrine with its paint peeling off . . . a window's arch curving blackly against the late afternoon light . . .

"And the United States, all this time?"

"Was using tact. Whenever the British pushed the Chinese against the wall and forced her to sign a piece of paper, the U. S. was just behind her asking for an autograph too. And got it. As did France. Whenever something was wanted, they merely waited until a missionary-incident occurred. Nor did they have long to wait. In 1870 a massacre at Tientsin, in 1875 the death of an interpreter, opened four more cities to the British; in 1890 and '91 anti-Christian riots in the Yangtze paved the way for more privileges. In 1897 several German missionaries were killed in Shantung. Germany at once seized Tsingtao, asked for and received a 99-year lease on the port and land controlling Kiaochow bay, and railway and mining leases. This was all the excuse Russia needed to occupy Port Arthur. Great Britain obtained Wei-hai-wei for 'so long a period' she said 'as Russia occupies Port Arthur.' France took Kwangchow-wa."

"And the United States?"

"Uncle Sam was busy with other matters, Hawaii and the Philippines, but called to the boys to be sure to keep the door open . . . Then some one thought of spheres of influence and immediately, like ants running to and fro over a big juicy worm, the Powers busied themselves allocating the country to capital. Until China grew afraid and suddenly turned furiously upon the foreigners

who had already so weakened her. And that brings us to the Boxer Rebellion."

"It goes on and on like a Chinese play, doesn't it?"

A small houseboat with five ragged, dirty, redcheeked children on its deck, and a pot of pink geranium, drew up close, suddenly darted out into the stream. The train of boats circled a small island on which stood an old crumbling pagoda. A junk with red-brown sail bellied out by the breeze glided by. The stream grew narrow again. On either side were dull blobs of graves, here and there the yellow of a fresh coffin.

"The Chinese lost their composure and for once forgot their good manners. There had been much unrest due to aggression of foreigners, the reforms of the Chinese themselves and the sudden reactionary edicts of the Empress Tzu Hsi. Secret societies of 'Boxers' composed largely of rowdies much like our Ku Klux Klan were multiplying. Then on December 31, 1899, an English missionary was killed, and the country was in an uproar. Even so, matters might have been smoothed over had not an international force taken the Taku forts which opened the way to Peking and Tientsin. This was the last straw. Empress Tzu Hsi against the advice of more levelheaded counsellors issued an edict to kill all foreigners. The German minister was killed, numerous missionaries and business people, thousands of Christian Chinese, the legations besieged. The Powers while not declaring war put down the riots with their usual efficiency, captured Peking, and looted the capital. For this attack of nerves and loss of temper the Chinese were charged up with 450,000,000 taels as indemnity* to be paid in 39 years, required to suspend civil examinations for five years, required to punish by death certain officials held responsible for the affair, to erect memorials to the German minister and others, and to give the foreigners the right to fortify

* In 1908 the U. S. announced its policy of returning a portion of its share of the Boxer indemnity. Sums remitted were set aside for Chinese scholarships for study in America. U. S. remitted unpaid portions of indemnity May, 1924. Other Powers made preliminary plans for remission but all plans called for allocation of funds to educational and cultural projects which merely raised a new danger of educational "spheres of influence." [Original note.]

and police the legation quarters. Disorders had spread now to Manchuria so Russia promptly sent large numbers of troops ostensibly to protect her subjects but actually to occupy—which she did ruthlessly—much of three provinces. At the same time she secured an agreement from China whereby she came into control of much of southern Manchuria. Immediately Japan and Great Britain became alarmed, formed the Anglo-Japanese pact, with the help of the U. S. exerted pressure on Russia who promised to withdraw her troops. But Russia procrastinated, showed more temper and greed with the result that in 1904 Japan felt that for the good of civilization she must go to war with her. Russia walked out of southern Manchuria; Japan walked in. Trouble began again. The U. S. did not like Japan's unfriendliness to her nationals, sought a railway concession herself, and proposed to neutralize the Manchurian railroads by a joint loan from the Powers. Immediately this brought Japan and Russia swooning into each other's arms against their common enemy, the Western Powers."

A soft rain had begun to fall. The stream grew wide. On either side as far as one could see stretched the cool green paddies of growing rice crisscrossed by darker slits where narrow canals ran. A cluster of thatched huts, enclosed by a mud wall, lay near the stream; a dog barked furiously at the boats as they passed. Someone on the roof above us coughed, cleared his throat, spat. A baby whimpered. A blind beggar played his *gi tzu* as he tapped tapped down the narrow run-way of the boat.

"Well . . ." she who had talked so long suddenly smiled. "You know the rest yourself. In 1911, the revolution. China became a republic. The seeds sown by foreign hands began to bear fruit in upheavals and confusions which have placed China today at the mercy of war lords. Tibet, Outer Mongolia took the opportunity to withdraw from China, never having felt a real part of her, and were pounced upon swiftly by Russia and Great Britain. In 1913 Yuan Shi Kai obtained what was called a 'reorganization loan' from Great Britain, France, Italy, Russia, Germany, and secured it by a lien on the salt monopoly. Sun Yat Sen, his radicals—the Kuomintang—protested bitterly but to no effect, and this salt has burned in the open festering sore of governmental chaos ever

since. The World War began. Japan immediately seized Tsingtao 'from the Germans' and forthwith as much of Shantung as she could wrest from the Chinese. In 1915 she presented her infamous and secret Twenty-one Demands which practically gave her control of China. The terms of the treaty leaked out, the other Powers roared, Japan smilingly kowtowed to bigger bullies than she, until once more their backs were turned.* Then China reluctantly and under heavy pressure from the Allies entered the World War. At its close, believing she had proved herself worthy of a place in the family of nations, she sent to the peace conference a group of men, brilliant, astute, save in their expectations. They asked for the restoration of former German properties to China, for cancellation of spheres of influence, withdrawal of foreign troops, postoffice, telegraphic communication; restoration of foreign concessions and settlements to Chinese jurisdiction. They did not get it. So indignant were the young educated Chinese that the Japanese-controlled Peking government dared not sign the treaty. In 1921-22 the U. S. called the Washington Conference and having a twinge of conscience gave China the opportunity to lay her case before the world. Many promises were made. A few carried out. The foreign postoffices were abolished. Extraterritoriality was to be abolished 'if and when.' Since then the war lords have held the stage."

"And the British?"

"Are still the British. The Chinese believe they do not intend giving up extraterritorial rights or any other rights they now possess. The old treaty of 1902 has rankled a long time: British goods exempt from likin duty; a Britisher in charge of maritime customs. Thorns. It is perhaps their lack of tact that has caused much of the recent feeling. You've seen the sign on the Shanghai park 'Dogs and Chinese not allowed.' Rather humorless, isn't it?"

* Feb.-Mar., 1917, Japan made secret treaties with Great Britain, France, Italy whereby these Powers assured her their support at the peace conference to her demands for the former German holdings in Shantung. In Nov. 1917 the U. S. entered upon the Lansing-Ishii agreement by which she recognized that "because of territorial propinquity . . . Japan had special interests in China." That this was terminated in 1923 after the damage had been done is almost beside the point. [Original note.]

"You make out quite a case against them."

"I don't mean to. Japan is as culpable, and nearer. We have done our bit of dirty work (as have France and Russia); though we use better manners than the others."

The cabin was now dark. A candle was stuck on the narrow ledge above the door. The alcohol stove was lighted and coffee prepared to accompany the good food Ah Oo had put up for us. The poukais were unrolled and blankets spread on the two broad shelves that would serve as beds. Queer odors of coffee and cheese and wood-alcohol crept from the foreigners' cabin and mingled with familiar smells of fish and tsai, urine and opium. The Chinese said, "Foreigners are aboard," and the peasants stretched on the roof of our cabin peered below curiously to catch a glimpse of the foreign devils. In the next cabin some one coughed and spat, coughed and spat without rest. The boat grew quiet. Only the slush-slush of the water against its sides and the low cough of the passenger next door.

By the time we had our coffee next morning the little launch was weaving its way through the traffic of the Whangpoo, very importantly whistling and belching smoke; now darting across the path of a Dollar steamship, now bullying the sampans clattering around it. At last it could go no further. The boats were detached and we were poled through Soochow Creek to the launch office.

It was Sunday morning. We found a path across the crowded houseboats to the street and there called rickshas. As we waited we looked about us, glad once more to be in Shanghai. The street seemed very quiet, strangely deserted. And suddenly we felt it, the tension, and saw it in the eyes of the passers-by, in the forced smiles of launch-office clerks. "Something has happened," we said. And as we rode down Nanking Road toward the French Concession, past house after house closed and barred, shop after shop with drawn blinds, we said again to ourselves, "Something must have happened."

It was quickly told us. On Saturday afternoon a thousand or more Chinese students had paraded up Nanking Road carrying banners denouncing extraterritoriality. With such slogans as "Free the Students" . . . "Give us back control of salt revenues"

... "We Demand Living Wages for Factory Workers" they had marched and thousands of spectators, Chinese and foreign, had watched them. Our friend who stood across from the British yamen had just said to someone near him, "It is like a football parade in America." Now they were in front of him. The students paused. Leaders conferred together. Then in a dog-trot they ran to the iron gates of the yamen, shouting, laughing, in sudden determination to free their fellow-students who had been imprisoned a short while before for leading a Chinese strike in one of the Japanese-owned cotton mills. In a great white mass they pushed toward the gates. The British officer in command gave a sharp order. Guns were raised, leveled into the mass of youngsters, fired. Six fell, instantly killed. Others were wounded. Confusion, uproar, screams, cries. And then abruptly, silence. Empty streets. Save for the six dead and the wounded.

Americans asked that night, why, *why* had not the British—if they felt compelled to repulse the crowd—turned the fire-hose on those kids? British imperialism replied that 'they had not thought of it.'

All Shanghai was very quiet that Sunday. There were conferences of Chinese behind closed doors. There were conferences of foreigners behind closed doors. A few mutual friends, Chinese and foreign, conferred together, determined to find a way to avoid this "crisis."

Doggedly the British as a group—with notable exceptions—maintained that the police were only doing their duty. The Americans were divided: business men were inclined to think "it's pretty bad but it's time something was done to show these fool students where to get off"; the missionaries, by no means unanimously, believed it a shocking and terrible piece of stupidity.

Mission schools in the nearby provinces closed. St. John University had its now-famous flag incident.

Tuesday I went to the Bund to buy gold for the trip to America. Exchange had taken a steep decline; there were rumors that the Chinese banks were suspending. On the way home I fell into line to board a street car. In front of me was a British woman of upper middle class status, in front of her a well dressed Chinese gentleman. As the Chinese started to board the car, the British

lady kicked him, snarled, "You damned Chinaman, haven't you the manners to let a lady get on first?" The Chinese bowed, stood aside quietly, and let the female on. I followed her. On the way home, the street car was rocked. Windows were broken. A passenger cut on the arm. The conductor cut on the cheek.

On the steamer to America I was placed at a table with two American missionaries. The second day out, I invited a Chinese girl, graduate of Gingling College, who had been put at a small obscure table by herself, to sit with us. The missionaries barely acknowledged the introduction. The next meal they did not appear until my friend and I had finished. The following morning a dining room steward asked me to tell the Chinese student that the missionaries did not care to have her at their table.

Well . . . why go on? It was the beginning, as every one knows, of two years of intense anti-Chinese, anti-foreign feeling . . . of childish retaliations, of foolish defences, of the rise of the Nationalists, culminating in the Nanking Affair where several foreigners were killed and others would have been, had not the foreign gun-boats in the Yangtze shelled the city.

And now tonight, January, 1938, as I write, the pictures of the Panay incident are being shown throughout the country and once more anger and hate and prejudices are being fanned into flames. To what end? This time it is against the Japanese. Three men were killed in the Panay incident, ruthlessly, without excuse. But remember, twelve years ago six Chinese youngsters were killed by the British, as ruthlessly, as needlessly. "The Japanese have no right in China; we can't sit by and see them steal her wealth and kill her people!" You hear it every day. But we Western imperialists have been stealing her wealth and killing her people for 100 years. "We can't sit by . . . there's our national honor . . ." No? We sit by and let our neighbors' children starve and do nothing about it. We sit by and see Negroes lynched and make no effort to punish the mob. We are not outraged when textile workers are killed, when miners starve. Here where we could defend our national honor with no bloodshed, with no risk of a collapse of civilization, we do nothing.* We've closed our eyes

* No isolationist am I. I believe in a consistent foreign policy that will promote peace. In 1931-32 we could have done something. In 1917 we could

to the depredations Great Britain has made upon India; Gandhi has been for most of us only a stooge for our wisecracks. We forget Africa; we forget Mexico; the Philippines.

I am thinking of the spring of 1917. Of the war to end war. Of violated Belgium. Of the *Lusitania*. Of the American boys whose lives were wasted because munitions must be made, loans must be protected, cotton must be sold, faces saved. I am thinking of Wilson re-elected because "he will keep us out of war"; of April 6, 1917. I am thinking of Franklin Roosevelt who says, "We want peace" and begins an armament building program never equalled before in this country; of Landon who wires hysterically, "I am standing by you"; of the recession; of low-priced cotton; of unemployment so easily solved by the draft—and the upward curve of munitions; of the 'menace' of fascism; the 'menace' of communism; of the new cry, and its old death-echo, "Make the world safe for democracy." [Winter 1937–38]

And the Waters Flow On³

(These glimpses of China are taken out of context from Miss Smith's writings.) [Original Note.]

Old Patterns

The city scarcely breathed in its quiet sleep. Only the dull beat of the priest's drum in the temple. Down on the river below the hospital hundreds of little houseboats crowded close together lay still, the black water smooth and tranquil under the pale light of the moon. A thin breeze pushed a few waves toward the shore,

have done something. In 1919. Even in the 19th century. But during a war, when insanity prevails, how can one reason? And force only begets more hatred and inevitably war. L. E. S.

stirred slow ripples. There was no sound save the soft rubbing of wood against wood.

Gathered close by a crumbling wall built when Bethlehem was young, Lincheng lived on in the warm spring night, its crooked dark streets breathing in the old rhythm of love and hate and birth and death:

Across the city in an inner apartment of a wealthy silk merchant's home sat his wife and little wife gambling at mah jong. Fat, sleek, crafty, with black hair smoothly drawn back from their faces, they sat across from each other gossiping amiably and smoking cigarette after cigarette. They had been thus since late afternoon. Near each sat an old amah fanning her mistress—for the evening was warm and they had eaten heavily at a birthday feast at noon. Two bowls of tea now grown cold were nearby. The old amahs sleepily watched the moves made by their mistresses as they tirelessly played on and on . . .

. . . Down a dark narrow alley filled with the stench of a public latrine, trotted a servant boy lighting the way with his oil paper lantern while behind him clumped an old mid-wife scolding him for walking so fast. The boy not lessening his pace, laughed and said there was need of haste . . .

. . . In a private room of the hospital Tsang Ling Oo, of more than fourscore years, lay staring at the shadowy wall in front of his bed. It had been a good life. An honorable member of the silk merchants' guild, a gentryman, he had kept the wealth left him by his venerable father and had added greatly to it. His wives had given him four sons and a number of daughters who were now married with children of their own. The last few years had been brightened by a plump merry-eyed concubine who tormented and teased but always gave herself to him softly and completely. Such smooth round thighs . . . A half smile played on his face. Yes, a life such as Kong Fu Tzé would have approved: money, wives who had borne strong children; sons carrying on the business; good friends most of them gone now; good wine, good food. He gave a little sigh, turned over on his side and died.

. . . Under the matting roof of a small boat wedged in among hundreds of others on the canal at West Gate, a small child whimpered restlessly. The mother sleepily felt around in the dark, found the crying child from among five sleeping ones at

her feet, picked it up, gave it her breast, patted the shoulder of another near her head who had stirred—and again fell asleep. . . .

. . . Up on the city wall a dog, mangy, half starved, barked furiously at the moon as he sniffed this dark corner, that, hoping to find a real feast as sometimes he did hidden away in wooden boxes. Then there would be a tearing of warm flesh, a crunching of bones, a trampling underfoot of a tiny dress. . . .

. . . Sprawled on her bed lay a young girl sobbing. She had cried all that day and the day before. She would continue to cry until her father gave her permission to return to the Mission School out of which she had been taken peremptorily when she had written of attending morning prayers. She had such good times in that school. Such good friends. They had parties and played basketball and sang queer foreign songs. She increased the volume of her wails. Listened again. Her father gave a low groan and turned over restlessly. Her almond eyes glinted with satisfaction, as she continued her sobs. . . .

. . . Lu Ong quietly let himself in the back gate of the Compound, walked soundlessly in his cloth slippers to his little room behind the kitchen of the Ladies' home. They would not like these nocturnal adventures of his. But what was he to do? He could not marry on his cook's wages of fifteen dollars Mex a month when he had not yet paid for his father's funeral. Only today the coffin maker had spoken to him. . . .

China softly breathing. . . .

The moon sank behind the Purple Pagoda. A breeze rustled the fresh new leaves of the mulberry trees. The night-watchman beating his drum to warn night prowlers passed in the street below and disappeared.

Out of the stillness sounded the whistle of the night launch from Shanghai. Cries of chair coolies shattered the quiet as they ran to the canal hoping for passengers. Servants with lanterns hurried out of tea shops where they had been gossiping while awaiting their masters returning on the launch. Laughter, shouts, *walla walla* of disputing chairmen filled the air. In a house near the canal a child half wasted with tuberculosis awoke and began to cough. A low whistle as the launch passed under South Gate bridge.

. . . The deep, low clang of the gong in the Temple of the Five

Virtues, a sound as soft as the dawn, stirred the sleeping city. Dung carriers and house servants and all others who attend to lowly work arose and began their tasks.

In a small, dark cell in the second court of the temple a man whose name has been forgotten lifted himself slowly from the hard rock floor and groped his way toward the pale square of grey in the blackness in front of him. He clung to the iron bars of the small aperture and peered through them at the world beyond—a world not as large as the court of the temple, holding only the wall opposite his cell, half of a door leading into the inner temple, one column carved in red and blue and green, which melted into a soft black in the faint light, and the tall black incense burner in the center of the court. His eyes, sunk deep in a face pallid from years of rice and tea moved slowly here, there, until they had accounted for every object in his world. A breeze touched his long black hair, which hung over bony shoulders, covered by rough, grey, priest's cloth. For thirty years he had kept his vow of silence. A bird stopped in flight, balanced for a moment on the tip of the incense burner, began to sing. A pause, then a crescendo of sound pressed deep into the peace of the temple court. The bird darted quickly over the roof. Silence again. The solitary had not moved. Now he fingered his beads restlessly. . . .

. . . Down the street from the temple, across the narrow canal, past old Tung Lo's coffin shop stretched the thin rectangle of the foreign Compound, alien and unsubstantial in the mists of early morning. Only the church steeple cut a black triangle against the pale light.

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—Bearing Gifts

She sat in her office. On the desk the mission school's financial records lay before her. It had been a good year, as far as the money was concerned. And now nearly finished. A good year too in other ways. For she had managed to secure some decent textbooks on science, for the first time. And the English had gone better this year. Now if she could find some one who could teach Chinese

classics as they should be taught—the young Chinese man she had had this year—

A tap at her door. Her *lai* brought a very young pupil into the room, advancing hesitantly, breathing a little quickly.

Rapidly she tried to place the child—for she took pride in knowing her pupils. Oh yes . . . the Zi child . . . Zi Ssu Ming . . . from the wealthy Zi family of Kashing . . . a little anti-foreign she believed they had been, until recently . . . sixth grade . . . no, the seventh.

She looked up and smiled at the young girl, and raised her eyebrows in interrogation.

Ssu Ming drew in her breath, made a quick bow in politeness to her honorable principal, spoke rapidly, her voice hardly more than a whisper, "I no more go to church," she said, "I not care to hear more about Jesus."

The thin hands moved slightly. "The term is almost over, only next Sunday and that is Commencement Sunday. I don't quite understand." Eyebrows raised.

Ssu Ming made another little abrupt bow. "I wish to come back next year. I like school—and you" her voice was a whisper now "but" her head came up bravely "I not like Jesus." She bowed again.

"Perhaps next year . . . you will feel differently about it. We shall see." The principal smiled at the flushed face.

Ssu Ming reached into her wide sleeve. "I bring you a small gift" she said and bowed again. "It is nothing." She laid a little package on the desk, suddenly smiled, drew in her breath, and darted out of the room.

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"The Road to Shuh"

They left the Compound by the side gate. As they went through the narrow streets the new foreign teacher practiced her Chinese on the children at play who laughed at the odd sounds and said to her and each other "*Yang sia sang.*" On the city wall the two missionaries turned, taking the west path.

Beyond the wall, across the river which stretched like a curved band of metal in the still air, clusters of thatched baked mud huts caught a glint of gold in their roofs.

Below them, the soft green plots of spinach and *tsai* in which peasants scratched with wooden implements turned black as the sun dropped behind the mountains. A thin dust, driven in from the Gobi sands, hung between them and the red clouds.

A bugle from the yamen sounded.

Grey figures of soldiers moved about in the court of a temple outside the Wall.

A dog sniffed here and there for food, and growled at them as they passed.

The sky faded.

They turned toward the Compound, stumbling a little on the dark path which led them back to the city. And then, as they were leaving the Wall, the young missionary crushed something under her foot. A little dress, a broken skull, a few soft bones, all that was left after the dogs feasted . . . She began to cry softly, tried to hide her tears with a laugh.

The older missionary smiled. "We have to get used to these things," she said quietly.

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They had gone on rapidly until they had come to streets bright with sputtering gasoline lights and cheerful with the busy din of shopkeepers, the cries of coolies bearing incredible burdens, of chairmen pushing aside pedestrians to make room for a wealthy silk merchant who sat, eyes looking beyond the crowd, as he was borne quickly down the narrow street to his home; past small foodshops where coolies exchanged bits of 'cash' for hot fried rice cakes and ate them at once there on the street wiping their mouths on their broad sleeves; and on until they turned abruptly into a dark and quieter street where the soft slam and burr of the silk looms in the small houses was a familiar sound to their ears.

Unobserved they stood at a doorway watching the man at the loom as he deftly worked in the satiny figure which gives brocade its lustre. Stripped to the waist he sat before the loom. In the soft light of the lantern thick strands of muscles under yellow skin

played quickly here, there, as he made the swift strong movements necessary to the pattern. Flat-chested and stooped he sat before his work, while the burr and slam of the loom beat out its rhythm, and over his thin wasted body muscles coiled and twisted and stretched until a small flower grew on the smooth ground of silk.

The girl looked up quickly at her companion. But the older missionary's face was tired and drawn and her eyes were staring far away beyond the man, the little house, the silk.

. . . .

As quietly and unobtrusively as she had lived, Miss Harrison died in her sleep. Mrs. Tsung told the foreigners about it. The evening before, she had read a chapter from the New Testament, made the bed comfortable and bade her patroness good night. Early the next morning she went in with a cup of hot coffee to warm her up—Miss Harrison's only luxury—and found her, like this.

The body was buried in the little Mission cemetery; the consul notified; her possessions divided among her embroidery women as her will dictated; a notice of her death cabled to the office in America; and Mrs. Tsung temporarily put in charge of the embroidery school until the mission committee could make further plans.

The Compound felt only relief for all had dreaded Miss Harrison's approaching retirement, knowing too well her fear of it. It was so much simpler, this way.

Sometimes, like this, one's problems are solved so easily, the young missionary was thinking as they left the little burial plot. And she had lingered behind the others, murmuring that she would come later. She walked slowly, paused at each of the graves. Here, the Merediths' baby; already so old the stone looked, as if it had taken on the great weight of China's age. She remembered the hot damp day when they had followed the small box to this place . . . Martha's white hard bewildered face . . . So seldom she wrote to any of them . . . as if she would like to forget those years out here—if she could forget. Julie said she was keeping house for her Uncle Bob and her mother . . . that she had given

a talk to the Junior League on Chinese art . . . Under a gnarled camphor that must have been a sprightly tree then was the darkened slab which bore the date September 13, 1898, and the name Sadie Martin. Sadie Martin had died of cholera . . . 1898 . . . that was before the Boxer Rebellion . . . Sadie . . . Somebody named Sadie had come far across the ocean to bring her ideas of right and wrong, of God, of humanity, to a heathen people . . . to a people who had built a civilization and maintained it for thousands of years. And Sadie had given her life for them . . . that they might learn to live like people in Dobbs, Mississippi, lived . . . The girl tried to envisage Sadie . . . how tall she was, or fat, or fair . . . quiet, or talkative . . . And here near a clump of bamboo was the first Lane child, Robert Lane, Junior, the worn inscription said. Someone had told her when little Martie died that the Lanes had lost their first baby in the same way, though the Lanes had never mentioned it. Encircling the small plot was an old stone wall. The fresh dirt of Miss Harrison's grave looked raw, crude, in this place of age, and death and silence and peace.

. . . .

She slowly followed the little path into the city. At the gate she turned suddenly to the right, climbed the crumbling steps which led to the top of the wall. The wind was raw and she searched for an old coffin where she could sit in shelter. At the turn of the wall she found one, crawled gratefully behind it. Beyond her stretched the river, dull and turgid. The wind had made it rough and the small boats scuttled past her with incongruous speed. A fisherman on the opposite bank was stretching out his seine. Back of him the fields were yellow and grey and dead, and beyond them the wide stretches of bare mulberry trees dissolved their solidity into tenuous, low-lying grey smoke.

More than six years out here. Years which had passed swiftly, uneventfully, save for sudden tense moments; splashes of color against a dullness. A little life. Martha—Jack—Jane—Julie—grey Mrs. Lane taking Doc's crumbs, what he had left after serving the heathen—kaleidoscopic memories of teas together, of tennis games, merged one into the other—her music—her old tubercular neighbor—Ssu Ming—China . . .

China . . . how she had tried to feel the authentic China—to grasp the reality of this old civilization. And always whatever knowledge she had gained turned into a dull lump of facts, slipped away, leaving her clutching only a few wisps of personal experiences. To these her mind would cling forever. Swiftly, rapidly, came faces of foreigners she had known; business people, Standard Oil—British-American Tobacco—Dollar Line—consular attaches—missionaries . . . old 'China hands.' And out of the multitude of faces one came and went, came and went, at last rising out of her memory:

She had been spending a few days in Shanghai, going to attend Mo Siang Ying's wedding one late afternoon. She had come from the wedding back to the Missionary Hotel. And in the large dining room she had been placed at a table with a Swedish missionary, a woman perhaps forty years old, with the inward look of those who have lived much alone. Over their mutton and potatoes they had talked casually.

"In Shanghai for a vacation?" she had asked to make conversation.

"No, only for a few days." The Swedish woman replied. Then added, "I brought my friend. My friend is not very well. We are sending her to Europe for a while." She cut a piece of mutton.

"Where are you stationed?"

"In Szechuen, China Inland Mission. We have been much alone. The two of us in a station. No other foreigners. We go months without seeing a foreigner. The Chinese are good to us. But Olga felt the loneliness. God sent us there—it was His will. I was glad to know that I was where He wanted me to be. But Olga said," the woman's hand trembled as she cut the mutton, "Olga said the wall pressed in upon her—the wall pressed in—"

The tense calm drawn tightly over every feature of the woman's face, over the immobile mouth, startled the younger missionary. She knew a little of these China Inland missionaries, who went to the farthest corner of the land with no means of support save their faith in God. She had heard of their bigotry and their selflessness.

She found that she could only murmur stupidly, "I am so sorry."

The woman went on. "Olga says she has forgotten Swedish and she wants to talk in her own language. She tries all day long to remember Swedish words, but all that will come to her is Chinese. She is very sad . . . We think she will be much better after a good rest at home." The Swedish woman's voice brightened.

"And you?"

The woman was surprised.

"Her boat sails tomorrow. There will be friends aboard. After I get her off I shall go back."

"Alone?"

"Yes. The work must go on. I must hurry back. It will take me five weeks to make the journey. I have been away a long time from my work."

The younger missionary could think of no reply.

The morning after she returned to Lincheng she read in the Shanghai paper a brief notice of the death of Olga Olsen, a missionary returning to Sweden. She had jumped through the port hole of the S. S. Maru while her companions were at dinner . . . Reading it she had wondered how long it would be before the other missionary on her lonely journey to Szechuen would hear of the death of her friend.

And now she was wondering once more about her . . . where could she be . . . what was she thinking far out in Szechuen as she saved souls for Jesus.

Big drops of rain splattered and stung her face as she sat on the old coffin and watched China slip slowly past her.

She wanted to hold each bit of it, to let it cut so deep into her memory that it could never be smoothed out by time. For it seemed to her that she looked upon the passing of a civilization. Something good and fine and still vigorous, ugly as is an old woman grown too wise to hide her ugliness, and beautiful as is all tried strength.

The old life would pass. In its stead would come the new. And no man could foresee what the heat of youth in its impetuous lust would conceive.

And her friends . . . She knew they would stay on and on, believing they were needed here.

A sail blackened itself against the sky, disappeared around the

bend. Dogs near the village of Laochow barked furiously, as suddenly hushed.

She listened to the slow spatter of rain on the old wooden coffin, listened to slow memories stirring as if a hand had touched the strings of a Chinese harp and softly they had sounded and softly echoed. [Summer 1938]

. . . .

✻ Act of Penance

[An Editorial]

Not often do we have so excellent an opportunity to study the human mind, stripped, as was given us during the recent weeks of the anti-lynching filibuster. Individual man seized by hysteria is a revealing spectacle, exhibiting in symptoms which only the naive call irrelevant his unsuccessful attempts to come to terms with reality. But mass-man—if we may use so inclusive a term to describe the southern senators—writhing in his emotional maladjustments becomes a phenomenon of more significance than the mere telling of his numbers would suggest. A careful analysis, therefore, of this recent exhibition made by a psychiatrist with the insight of a Karl Menninger in collaboration with a southern sociologist possessing the objectivity of a Rupert Vance would produce a study of significant proportions.

But even such laymen as we can not but ponder a few of the symptoms which to eyes not wholly innocent suggest a curious state of health among those who represent us in the U. S. Senate. When white men scream out that lynching is the only means to prevent the mingling of the races, white women, and black women too, raise their eyebrows. Excellent clinical descriptions of such symptoms and their psychogenesis may be found in the writings of Sigmund Freud, in the recent and perhaps more easily read *Man Against Himself* by Karl Menninger, and are specifically discussed in terms of southern culture in Dollard's *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*; but such crude manifestations as our southern senators recently gave us can be correctly interpreted by any woman (and quite probably any man) of the mental age of 12 without the aid of a psychoanalyst.

It is with relief therefore that we turn from the scrutiny of such pathology to a survey of the 'mind of the South' as bared to us in the editorials of the period. This old myth, postulating a unity which has had its only reality in wishfulness, once more exposes its fantasy-origin in the variance and downright antithe-

sis of the opinions expressed. There is no 'mind of the South' as a casual reading of these editorials will demonstrate: there are those who have exchanged the chalk by which they formerly transferred the waste matter of their minds to old fences, for the editorial typewriter by which they still do the same; there are the empty reeds that are filled by any vagrant wind of opinion that blows across them; and there are, thank God, the Virginius Dabneys, the John Temple Graves, the Jonathan Daniels, the Mark Ethridges, the Gerald Johnsons, the Grover Halls, the J. E. Dowds (and those less well known journalists who make of papers like the *Statesville, N. C. Daily*, the *Burlington Times*, the *Petersburg, Va. Progress*, the *Athens, Tenn. Athenian* fertile spots in this old intelligence-drained region) whose adult emotions and perspicuity of mind would be a credit to any civilized nation on earth, and are a bland ointment to the humiliated feelings of thousands of southerners who are still sickened by the obscene picture, not easily erased from the memory, of an Ellender, a Cotton Ed Smith, a Bailey, a McKellar, a Bilbo, spitting tobacco juice in eloquent spurts as they rant of southern chivalry, the South's pure women, the supremacy of the white race, the 'finest culture on earth' of which presumably they (and Mrs. Andrews) are the scented flowers. Sickened too by the political opportunism and hypocrisy of many other senators who, while not stooping to the level of Ellender's burlesque show, made no move to draw the curtain but did much to prolong the scene.

Yet we in the South who feel so much shame are not without sin. We can now perform the ancient rites of handwashing—this editorial is no more than that—but we shall not be free of guilt until we rid our region of inertia and ignorance and poverty (interrelated, to be sure); until we rid ourselves of the haunting sense of inferiority which manifests itself through the compensatory mechanisms of Nordic bluster and paranoiac destructiveness. [Spring 1938]

✻ [Two Reviews]

NEGRO FOLK TALES. By Helen Adele Whiting. The Associated Publishers, Inc., Washington, D. C. 1938. \$1.10.

NEGRO ART, MUSIC AND RHYME. By Helen Adele Whiting. The Associated Publishers, Inc., Washington, D. C. 1938. \$1.10.

There is so obvious a need for children's books such as these that one would be inclined to judge with leniency any attempt to fill this need. But Miss Whiting and her illustrator, Lois Mallou Jones, have done a job that is more than adequate. The illustrations are simple, imaginative, rich, and suggestive of African backgrounds; and there is a sweep and rhythm in them that reminds one of the beautiful designs created by little children when finger-painting. The folk tales, the brief accounts of African crafts and later contributions which the Negro race has made in America, are given simply and in idiom appropriate to childhood.

The books were designed for supplementary readers for the third grade. They not only are well adapted for this purpose but will please any child in or out of school and many an adult as well. [Fall-Winter 1938-39]

✿ Behind The Drums⁴

(With a long preface to a very short play)

It would be simpler to set down the words, music and stage directions of our rhythm-montage and let the reader assess the result for what it is worth. But in so doing, we should ignore values, larger perhaps than those inherent in the play, which grew out of the making of it.

It is a play created by eighty-five young girls and adults and it was begun long before some of them came to live on Old Screamer.

It began years ago with the singing of the spirituals, with a sudden cheapening and jazzing up of the tunes, with a "swing-ing" of *And He Never Said a Mumblin' Word*—and a shamed silence. Later, someone talked about the Sorrow Songs, and Frances sang them. She sang for an hour while we lay on the floor and listened, candles throwing shadows on her face and ours, beyond us Old Screamer throwing its shadow on the roofs of our little cabins. Shut in by mountains, cut off from the world of trouble and conflict beyond us, we lay secure in our peace and listened. And while we listened, we entered, without knowing it, another world of trouble, of black-dark trouble, and the shadow of it fell on young white hearts. And no one forgot that evening.

It was a summer later perhaps when Frances sang old ring-shouts to us, and interested by Rosamond Johnson's *Rolling Along in Song*, we began to drum out on the floor primitive rhythms while she searched for ring-shouts to match. And this was fun—a new game.

Then one day someone spoke of a lynching in South Georgia. "Is it true?" "Yes, it is true." "But surely they did not pour gasoline on him and burn him?" "Yes." "Why?"

Why? Question old as the white man's and Negro's life together; young as each new South-born child.

A greedy question that will not be satisfied with one answer. Or two.

But we tried. We tried to untangle the tight strands of the Negro's and the white man's lives, discarding blame as one would lay aside a knife, knowing that if we cut one strand we cut both—strands grown together as two grape vines that have twined and intertwined and twined again from roots old and tough and big to new fresh tendrils.

And afterward most of the girls went easily back to tennis and riding, play and laughter, but one young girl said softly, "I am ashamed of white people. After all . . . we have the power" she added.

And then one night this past summer, someone half idly, but not wholly so, tapped on the floor, beating out African rhythms, beating out a story in her mind. And, as if they felt it, too, others sitting around making nightly reports laid aside their charts, and suddenly one of them said "Let's make drums. Let's make as many drums as we could possibly want."

We knew that we would like to do this. So we made drums. We took nail kegs and old inner tubes of tires and made drums. We searched the farms in the near-by coves for skins, soaked them, scraped and dried them, found hollow logs, made more drums. Our driver had *his* idea of how a drum should be made—and sound—and so he made drums, back of the kitchen; our stable man had different ideas about the making of drums—and how they should sound—so he made drums, down at the stables.

There came a day when three drums were finished—nail kegs and inner tubes. We heard the sound when we were far away: low, like the sigh of some great creature. It couldn't be a drum, someone said, it is the drone of a plane behind the mountain. But soon we were gathering and soon we were beating. Thereafter, each evening when the sun dropped over the peaks beyond us and the valley turned blue, someone would bring out a drum, and then someone else, and another, and another, with few words—for drum beating is not often a riotous affair but a grave pleasure, in which one takes austere satisfaction, if one is a real drum beater.

We were in the library one night, eighty of us, beating drums, singing work songs, spirituals, making new songs. Slowly a girl rose to her feet, stood unmoving for a moment, began to dance. No one spoke. Another stood. Another. The beating went on.

Then everybody laughed, feeling good and at ease and relaxed, and we went to bed tired and sleepy.

But not all could achieve so facile a synchrony of body and emotions and drum beating. One little girl who found it hard to give up the security of home, who still felt difficult and pressing the demands of her new environment to which others adjusted so smoothly, said one day suddenly "I don't like it," lips trembling, "I don't like the beating." And so we changed to a modern swing rhythm and watched the ease come back on her face. There were others, too, who fought the pull of the tom tom, resisting, as if they felt walls crumbling, behind which lay dammed up unconscious memories of a personal and phylogenetic past—and feared lest their immediate conscious selves be drowned in its torrents.

One day, unaware that she was observed, a little girl with sensitive thin tight face and eyes holding that lost look one sees so often on the young went up to one of the drums. She stood for a long time looking at it. Slowly she picked up a stick and softly beat it. Once, twice. Listened. A little clumsily groping for rhythm she tried again. Listened. Sighed. Softly laid down the stick and walked away. . . .

And so, the valley overflowed with the sounds of our drum-beating, while Old Screamer loomed above us like a giant sounding board, giving back the rhythms again, and within us another sounding board, old as Old Screamer, received them and made of them new strange patterns. . . .

But now we must get on with the play. For inevitably out of so much excitement and pleasure came a desire to give form to feelings.

We would make a play. We would make a play about the Negro because though we experimented with many kinds of rhythm patterns we were always drawn back to 'primitive' patterns; though we sang many kinds of music, we liked best the Negro songs; though in our search for rhythms we came close in our minds to many races, only the Negro and the drama of his three hundred bitter years of living with white men moved us deeply.

With little talk we knew that we would use the tom tom beaters, the singers, the dancers, the speakers (our choral speech group) the mask makers—groups already functioning in our life

on Old Screamer—shaping the pattern of our play to these available human materials as well as to the inherent dramatic necessities of our theme. Because most of us were young, some of us knew that we would make a simple, naïve play but, we hoped, an honest one.

And we began, all of us, for everybody was in this play, feeling our way step by step, feeling no sense of haste, although it was done in two weeks.

We added a solo speaker whom we called the Voice and we tied the units of this rhythm-montage together by the tom toms which beat, sometimes in background, sometimes in foreground, throughout the play. Scene after scene we worked through together.

We decided to use for the first set a grey cyclorama on which in the center-back would be a large mask of a Negro face. When it was finished, the mask was about six feet by four feet in dimension, a simply modeled face of strong Negroid features, a face of austerity, of passion and sadness and thought. We used what the girls call 'tropical colors,' sharp greens and scarlets and browns, and blues and greys. The planning of this was easy and seemed to us right, for the Africa scene and the stockade-slavery scene. Then we discussed the slavery scene. What kind of set should it be? Asked this question, quickly fifty hands were raised, fifty young white voices cried "a big house—white columns—mammy—pickaninnies—somebody singing old songs—"

"But remember—you are not white girls talking, you are now Negroes. Think a minute. If you were a slave, what in slavery would hurt you most, would mean most to you? Remember, only a few slaves were house-servants, some perhaps never saw the big house . . . what would mean most to *you* . . . what would stay on your mind the most. . . ."

Little girls, big girls gravely pondered, sitting there on the floor, some of them bewildered, a little puzzled by these words. And then a fourteen-year-old spoke. "It would be the separation," she said. "That fear never leaving you of being separated from your family, from your husband or your lover, or your children. Afraid tomorrow they'd sell you or those you love."

The room was quiet. And there followed grave talk of this fear,

of the importance which the mother held in the Negro family, how she came to symbolize the only security it had, how later after legal slavery, she still symbolized this security . . . how she lost her children. . . .

"You're crying," one girl whispered to another, "and I am, too," she sniffled and tried to laugh.

Then we talked of cotton . . . and we built this scene using for a set the same grey cyclorama with an enormous boll of cotton (painted) on a backdrop; using for the pantomime, an old mother sitting hands wrapped in apron, eyes looking at the stars, while the Singers sang "Tramping" and "Hush, Hush, Somebody's Calling My Name," and a procession of slaves, field hands, artisans, old men, and young, children, house servants, passed slowly across the stage in the shadowy background.

A girl from one of the densely Negro-populated counties of Georgia waited afterward. There were not tears in her eyes but anger. "We cry," she said, "and then we forget. I am today ashamed of being white, but that doesn't help the Negro. I wish I knew something to do. How could my people have done it? They are kind. They try to be good. They pray. Everybody in my family prays." . . . her lips were trembling now, "*everybody*. . ."

The play grew. And suddenly one day it was finished. In three days we would give it. In three days—"Lordy, Lordy," someone cried, "we have no audience! We're every blessed one of us in it! What'll we do?" It was no idle question. A play without an audience . . . oh no . . . So it was suggested that they ask their parents to come if they thought their parents would enjoy it. "You see," this was a time when you felt your way, "we are all southerners, we love the south, we each in our own way think we love the Negro, too, but we do not agree. Some of your parents will like this play. Others will not like it. We shall not say that they are wrong. We shall not think it either. Emotional maturity means, in part, forming your own opinion. You try to be 'emotionally mature' up here and you have a right to form your own opinion, but remember, so have your parents this right. Remember, too, that as we do not blame each other here but try instead to understand each other and change a situation so as to avoid that same mistake again, so we are not interested in fixing on any

one blame about the Negro. We would like to understand him better and ourselves better, and do what we can to change the situation. That is all."

One girl said, "My parents will like it. Father says 'the search for truth is a great and brave adventure.'" Some of the girls looked at the speaker a little wistfully. Another spoke quickly, "There is no need for me to fool myself a moment. Mother gets hysterical, simply *hysterical* if you talk about Negro equality, or labor! So count my folks out." And there were others who did not know, who were not sure. . . .

And then somehow the day came, and the night, and the audience. . . .

The chorus (the Singers and Speakers) are in the balcony to the rear of our theatre facing the stage. The Voice stands in the shadows below the stage, and with her in the semi-darkness are two, sometimes three tom tom beaters. The curtain is closed when the Voice speaks, and opens only for the brief dance-pantomime scenes, during which we rely on lighting, stage sets, music, costume and designs made by moving bodies of dancers for dramatic impact. The tom toms are beating softly, then more loudly, dying away to a whisper:

(The script follows, incomplete for we have omitted words of songs, music, tom tom rhythm patterns, and dance patterns):

<i>The Voice:</i>	Beating . . . ten thousand years. . . . And even now, in silence, making bright patterns of laughter Making black patterns of pain Making life. And you and I Listening Hear as we hear our own heartbeat, a people Telling an old story. A story old as falling rain—
<i>Speakers:</i>	Old and cruel as a tiger's mouth Old as the beginning of all things Old as sorrow.

(Tom toms beat on)

The Voice: Behind the drums—Africa:
Burning the eye with bright splendor
Lashing the skin with danger,
Heating the blood with beauty—

Speakers: A drowsy copper snake, slipping through the centuries.

(A pause—tom toms beating on)

The Voice: Behind the drums, lovers:
Hands smooth to the touch as weathered ivory
Thighs soft as lapping water in night-time
Whispers warm as jungle sands in sun-heat.

(Tom toms continue to beat on softly, as the Voice pauses)

Behind the drums, laughter:
Pounding the blood
Quickening the pulse
White teeth . . . wide mouth . . . brown bodies—
Speakers: Singing laughter
Sobbing laughter
Dancing, dancing
Pounding
Beating
Lashing
Burning. . . .

Scene 1.

(Tom toms drown out Speakers, as curtain rises on African tribal scene. A ceremonial is taking place before the warriors go out to battle, in which a purification rite is suggested—the tabu idea used—a suggestion of religious ecstasy. There are five dancers, twenty tom tom beaters, an old woman possessed, a dance around a drum in which a spirit seems to be imprisoned, ending as two gro-

tesque figures eight feet tall in masks rush out from the wings and, their white robes swirling about them, dance madly. The curtain falls.)

(The drums grow faint, strong, slow)

The Voice: Behind the drums, death:
A creeping cat through the jungle
A crunch of bones in hungry mouth
Shadows. . . .

Whisperers: (from various spots in the theatre):
Shadows . . . shadows . . . shadows. . . .

The Voice: White man's chains
White man's gold
White man's lust. . . .

Speakers: Black man proud
Strong black man
Man of laughter
Travel a long road—

Speakers: Travel a sun-down road
Travel three hundred black-dark years
Down a lonesome road. . . .

(*Singers* hum "Lonesome Road" as the *Voice* continues)

(Tom toms . . . very soft here)

The Voice: Black girl looking
Black girl loving
Black girl losing her man
Down a lonesome road
Across the seas—

The Speakers (very softly): Across the centuries

(One of the *Singers* carries the melody of *Lonesome Road*, while others softly hum the harmony.)

Scene 2.

(Curtain opens on the dance of the captives which symbolizes the long hard journey from stockade to ship. Only tom toms are used. Curtain falls,

tom toms continue with a change in rhythm pattern.)

The Voice: Across the South
 Across the years
 Proud man grow humble
 Black man find his place;
 Find chains
 Find Jesus.

Speakers: Yes, Lawd, find Jesus.

The Voice: Lost and lonesome
 Black lambs ahuddling.

Speakers: Waitin' for de Lawd
 Waitin' for heaven. . . .

The Voice: Down the black-dark road—

Speakers: Down the black-dark road awaitin'. . . .

(Light and dark voices are used here effectively with a strong high voice speaking 6th line. All voices for last lines dying to a whisper.)

Awaitin'
 Alovin'
 Alosin'
 Aprayin'
 Sweet Jesus
 Ah'll see ma baby in heaven . . .
 Sweet Jesus
 Ah'm awaitin'. . . .

Scene 3.

Curtain opens. (A spotlight on the old mother.)

The Voice: Mother of blackness
 Mother of lost sons
 Mother of misery
 Awaiting.
 Hands wrapped in apron
 Body wrapped in patience
 Heart wrapped in God—

Looking at the stars
Looking at Heaven. . . .

Singers: (Sing "Tramping." . . . "Hush-hush." . . . Tom
toms beat softly as procession of slaves passes.)
(Black-out. Curtain).

The Voice: Like the deepening waters of floodtime
Like the mumble of toothless old men
Like a furrow plowed long and unending
Days come . . . days pass away. . . .
Years . . . curve into centuries.

Speakers: Rubbing the hands in labor
Bending the spirit to white pride
Stooping the heart to shame.

The Voice: Rain and sun. . . .

Speakers: Sun and rain
Rain and sun
Sun and rain. . . .

The Voice: Greening the cotton fields
Fluffing the stalks with richness
Making a full sweet breast for white children's
mouths. . . .

Speakers: Making a salt sweat-taste on black lips.

(Tom toms change pattern).

The Voice: Like the crack of a giant tree falling
Like the snap of lightning on hot nights
Came the breaking of shame bonds
Came the breaking of chains.

Speakers: Black man laughed
Black man clapped big hands
Threw back head and SHOUTED
FREE . . .
AH'M FREE . . .
BLESS GOD . . . MAN AH'M FREE . . .
FREE. . . .

The Voice: But cotton so soft
Cotton so fluffy
Covered the fields with white silence

Smothered black man's shouting.
Speakers: (Faltering) Ah'm free . . .
 Bless God . . . Ah'm free . . . Ah'm free. . . .
The Voice: Black hands labor on
 Black bodies sweat on
 Black hearts ache on. . . .
Speakers (half whispering): Ah'm free . . . Ah'm free . . .
 Ah'm . . . Lawd Gawd . . . have mercy on black
 man . . . mercy.
 (Tom toms beat softly).
The Voice: Misery . . .
 A hound dog
 Beating the dust with its tail.
Singers: (Sing work song "Gwine down" . . . and as curtain
 is raised, they sing "Workin' on de Chain Gang,"
 and Chain Gang dance is done in a slow work
 rhythm with the tom toms. For backdrop we use
 the same cotton boll on grey cyclorama. Dancers
 are dressed in chain gang stripes).
 (Curtain falls.)
Singers: Ah've got misery.
Speakers: Yes Lawd!
Singers: Ah've got misery.
Speakers: Yes Lawd!
Singers: And Ah've got song. . . . (this is chanted on two
 tones).
The Voice: A gold tooth in trouble's wide mouth—
Speakers: A-brightenin'
 A-shinin'
 Wide mouth a-singin'
 Wide mouth a-shinin' with song!
The Voice: Black hands a-strumming
 Black feet a-stomping
Speakers: Stompin' out the sadness
 Stompin' out the blues. . . .
 Cake-walkin' crost de misery line. . . .
 Cake-walkin' to heaven. . . .

(Curtain rises. Brash gay cake-walking scene
Curtain falls. Tom toms change to slow rhythm,
then to quick low rapid beats).

The Voice: Blood hounds a-panting
Panting down the years—

Speakers: Nigger in de cypress swamp
Nigger in de shadows. . . .

Whisperers: Shadows . . . shadows . . .
Shadows. . . .

Speakers: Hush your feet from stompin'
Hush your mouf from laughin'
Hush your mind from thinkin'
Hush your heart from beatin'
(Tom toms, soft but rapid)

The Voice: Hate with tongue a-lolling
Panting down the road—

Speakers: (dark voices): Death is a white man
Holding high a torch!

(*Light* Death is a nigger

Voices: Swinging from a limb!

(*All:* Swinging crost de misery line
Swinging . . . into heaven. . . .

(Curtain rises on lynching scene. The shadow of a
noose is swung on the back drop. Right, backstage,
stand four Ku Klux Klansmen, motionless, with
torches burning. Upstage, facing the noose shadow,
backs to audience, are the same group we saw
as slaves, in varying attitudes of prayer, terror,
horror, grief, anger).

Speakers: (Whispering) Gawd . . . Jesus . . . Gawd have
mercy . . . Sweet Jesus. . . .

(Curtain falls).

Singers: "Nobody Knows de Trouble Ah've Seen" (all of
the song).

(Tom toms gradually quicken, change finally to
jazz rhythm).

The Voice: Swinging . . . from the cotton fields
 Swinging to Harlem.
 Jazzing cross the misery line
 Jazzing cross Jordan
 Jazzing to heaven. . . .

Speakers: Hotcha . . . Baby!
 Ah've got song
 Ah've got music
 Ah've got ma baby
 Ah've got ma man. . . .

(Curtain rises immediately on Harlem Scene. Back drop for this scene is a painting of a swing orchestra leader madly waving his baton. Tom toms change pattern as curtain falls).

The Voice: Jazzing to hunger
 Jazzing to waste
 Jazzing out of black jobs
 Jazzing to fear. . . .

The Voice: Hard times for black man

Speakers: All the same old tune
 All the same old singing

The Voice: With a new word here and there

Speakers: All the same old rhythm

The Voice: With a new step here and there.

Singers chanting: Ah've got ma music

Speakers: Who got yo baby?

Singers: Ah've got ma blues
 Ah've got ma free time

Speakers: Sho—white man got yo job.

Singers: Ah've got ma liberty

Speakers: Sho—yo know to read and write.

Singers: Ah've got—

The Voice (calmly with a kind of long range hope): Jungle night
 is ending
 Black night a-passing

(*Singers and Speakers* make side comments but *Voice* continues
 calmly, unfalteringly).

Singers and Speakers: How come yo say—

The Voice: Sun is a-creeping up
Gold tooth a-shining

Singers and Speakers: Man!

The Voice: Trouble's mouth a-shutting
Hope is a-stomping
Cross the misery line.
Stomping cross to heaven
Through a half shut door—

*Singers and Speakers: That's right! (bitterly) . . . Jim Crow
heaven . . .*

The Voice: Stomping cross to freedom
Stomping cross to liberty. . . .

Singers and Speakers: Jesus! . . . Sure, free to starve . . .

(Tom toms keep on as *Voice* pauses a moment).

The Voice: Drums in your black heart
Drums in your soul

Singers and Speakers (in half whisper): Yes?

The Voice: Beating out a new song
Beating out a life. . . .

Singers and Speakers: Pray Gawd! . . . Life for what . . .

The Voice: Beating out a new road
Through a half shut door—

Singers and Speakers (half whispering): Yes . . . Jesus. . . .

The Voice: Beating out a new life
Through a half shut door

(Tom toms beat on as voices—expressing varied
Negro opinion—die away. All is again quiet save
for the soft drum-beating).

The Voice: . . . Even now . . . making bright patterns of
laughter
Making black patterns of pain
Making life . . .

Speakers (softly): Shadow of life

Whisperers: Shadows . . .

The Voice: And you and I listening

Hear as we hear our own heartbeat
A people
Telling an old story . . .
Old and cruel as a tiger's mouth
Old as the beginning of all things
Old as sorrow.
The end.

[Fall 1939]

✿ So You're Seeing the South⁵

Lady, Ask Me Something Hard

Know the South? Me? Know ever inch of it! Truck you see there—it and me's covered ever inch of it. Bet you couldn't think up a question I couldn't answer quick as that! Tell you the thing you'll worry about most goin round. It's the coffee. Yeah . . . you get to studyin about it—reckon it'll be worse or better than last cup you got down the road. Yes, mam—sure like to take a look at them questions you been tellin me about. Lady—you couldn't think up a question bout the South I couldn't answer fore it was out of your mouth . . . Next time, if I was you, I'd not offer big money for a thing easy as that. Know folks has to learn and I don't mean to be criticisin. Well, better be limpin along. Old wagon and me gotta clip off 300 more little miles come dark. Sure . . . we're on the stretch-out. Who aint these days! So long . . . an make sure to have a big time on your trip.

Stars Over Jordan

So you're seeing the South? Well, well, and you're a Georgian. Will you let an old man give you a little advice my dear? Try to see something *good*! Easy to see bad things. Everywhere there're bad things. World over. Now if you were crawling on all fours, your nose would pick up stale and mighty unpleasant odors which it doesn't get when you're standing straight, but it would miss the smell of good clear air with the sunshine in it, and the sweetness of blooming things, wouldn't it? There're blooming things in the South . . . everywhere. Don't ever let yourself forget that. Can't prove it, any more than I could prove I loved my old mother. But I know it . . . you know it . . . everybody born down here knows it . . . Bend of grass in the wind there, aint it a thing now to look at . . . suck of water gainst lily roots . . . way a hickory leaf eases to the ground in sweet giving up of its place in the sky . . . way the moss hangs on that old oak there—day after day—months—years—right moment comes—drops like a sigh . . . way

the air blows cross your face soft and slow like most folks' talk . . . way . . . Sitting here . . . nothing to do but knock the ash out my old pipe, put in new fillins knock the ash out again . . . keep thinking . . . You don't think much about the hard times you had . . . ten per cent, twelve, sometimes twenty per cent interest you had to pay the banker . . . you forget how you hated him for it, hated him because he made you push your tenants hard as he pushed you, hard as somebody was pushing him . . . hated them cause you knew you sinned against them . . . feared them sometimes because you knew there was nobody neath em to push down hard on to ease the hate inside *them* . . . Come a time, you stop thinking about it . . . yes . . . Look over there . . . front of that cabin. Old Mose . . . sitting there . . . same as me. Old black man . . . old white man. Color don't mean much now to Mose and me. Not now. Just two old men sittin in the sun. Eighty-five years we've lived, Mose and me. As bad years I reckon as folks ever lived through . . . But we've seen spring come . . . yes, mam, the prettiest sweetest way of coming a man could wish for. No bustle. Nothing flashy. Kind of like dreaming about a woman you've loved. Sit dreaming . . . look up . . . and she's there . . . smiling at you . . . right there by you . . . That's the way spring comes down here . . . eighty-five times I've seen it come . . . like that. Yes, I know . . . Old Trouble's had us all down here squeezed mighty tight in his hand. And no way out without hurting somebody . . . bad. Used to worry about it when I was young. Must be a right way out, I'd say. Must be. Ought to be a way out that won't hurt nobody. Used to think that. Well . . . one day knew better. Knew better . . . Knew a man could get himself in such a fix he couldn't get out, without hurting somebody bad. Yes . . . reckon that was time I realized I was gettin old . . . reckon so . . . Well—we sit here . . . Mose and me . . . shadow crosses the grass—we know a buzzard's gone by . . . slosh of water in the pond there, the old gator's moved from one side to t'other . . . And when that clump of palmetto starts turning black in the evenin we know its bout time for old men to be going to bed. So you're seeing the South . . . It's a fine thing to do. But remember—mire's there. Yes, it's there. Plenty. Plenty. And if you keep looking too close at it, you'll not see the stars overhead—and they're a pretty sight to see . . . a real pretty sight . . .

I've Just . . . Lost Control

Yes, I've heard my husband speak of you. Please rest your coat, won't you, and sit down? . . . that we can be of value to you on your trip? I don't know that we can but we'll be glad to help. Introductions to . . . yes, of course . . . my husband will see about it for you I feel sure. Yes. It's good that you want to see the Negro South too . . . Yes . . . I beg your pardon—I didn't hear . . . No. No—I'm not sick—I—I—Some of your work is with children, isn't it? What do you do when you have—a child—who has had a bad—shock . . . who . . . Today my little girl . . . maybe we've been wrong . . . but we've thought . . . my husband and I . . . it seemed best to us not to let her run into—things until she was older. So she's never been—around white people. We—we wanted to give her faith in herself first—and pride—and belief—in her own race. It seemed to us—we read the child psychologists and they—it seemed if we could make these first years secure and happy for her—maybe she could take the world later—even here—without bitterness . . . you must forgive . . . me . . . for . . . crying . . . like this . . . I've never . . . lost control . . . before . . . I've—always believed . . . a person—ruins her life if she lets hate in . . . My husband and I both—learned to—laugh—at—things . . . and not let them hurt . . . too much. This year we put her in the University Laboratory School—and usually I take her back and forth. But it's only a block or two . . . and lately I've been letting her—walk home . . . Today—a white boy stopped her . . . called her—called her—words . . . told her . . . things. . . . I'll get myself together . . . in a moment . . . I've just . . . lost control . . . you see—she's only six . . . I don't know what—to tell her. . . . I've been trying to think—all afternoon what to—tell her . . . Yes, please come back—I'm sorry to spoil your visit . . . this way.

And Plenty Money

You want to hear me play? Sure! Move over girls, and let the lady hear me play. Now what'd you like to hear? . . . Can I play boogie woogie? Can I! Listen to this . . . What do you think of it? . . . I'm good, don't you think? Maybe you'd like to hear

me sing too . . . You would? . . . How was that? Thanks. Oh, I'm good all right. Maybe I'm not good as Marian Anderson in some ways, but I got plenty Anderson hasn't got—just burnin me up inside. Sometimes feel like it'll burn me to a cinder if I don't . . . Some day I'm going to have my own orchestra and they'll break down and cry and beg me to hush—I'll be so good. Yeah . . . they'll—Books? I don't like books much. Rather sit at the piano and make things up. You don't have time much to read in college. But I liked *Gone With the Wind*. I liked it a lot . . . Yes—but lots of colored people too sensitive. They make me laugh! White people's ways don't bother me. Phoof! Sure! you know all that—but you don't think about it—see? And all that in the book happened long time ago. You can't take history *personally*—see? All I want is to have an orchestra and make people so crazy with my music they can't sleep nights. And plenty money . . . If you have a car and clothes and plenty money, and folks knowing your name everywhere—what you care about anything else for? What you care?

When You've Stood About As Much Bad Food

So you're traveling through old Dixie . . . Wonder what you'll see? Wonder what you've got eyes to see? To most folks going round it's a lot of pretty scenery and bad dirt and shanties and cracker talk—and the damnest food on earth—if you'll excuse me, mam. Sloppy coffee . . . grease. Sorter covers the South, don't it, like the dew. Yeah . . . Best cooks in the world in our homes when we've got a little money to buy rations with and have had enough to be used to rations. But we don't like to cook for the public. Think they ought to fix their bacon over their own camp-fire, don't we? Who's that all time talking about the disappearance of our last frontier? Somebody who goes home to supper every night, lay my last dollar on it. Why mam, everything about us nearly is frontier. May be wore out but it's still frontier. Reminds me of a woman I heard talking not long ago about Caroline Miller's book—what she call the dad-blamed thing?—that's right. Well, she was talking this woman and her voice twanged like a guitar. She wanted to know if South Georgians weren't still furious with Mrs. Miller about that book. 'There

couldn't have been such crude people in Ware County,' she twanged—herself about as refined as an oyster shell. 'Even in South Georgia there must have been some aristocrats.' Good Godamighty . . . I ask your pardon, mam. So I turned to the lady and I said 'Madam' I said, 'good Goda—.' Well, never mind about that.

If you've got to go on this wild-geese chase—and what you doing it for anyway, you haven't told me that yet. Now if that's not the—All right! When you've stood about as much bad food as you can stand, tell you what to do. Forget all your worries about our poverty and racial problems, and unemployment and too many children, and too many churches (you're dad-blamed right there) and soil erosion, and too few hospitals and bad housing (My God, we're in a bad mess, aint we)—turn your car into Alabama and drive to Talladega. When you're five miles from town, stop your car, get out and walk the rest of the way. Countryside's mighty pretty—hills, vistas, all that, and plenty of battle markers. But that's not why you're walking. No mam. You're walking up an appetite for a dinner you're going to try to eat at the Purefoy Hotel. All right. You get there. They make you register. Then they show you the old silver wash bowl and pitcher and slop jar in the guest room and some old furniture that'll do, and a lot of old mirrors ugly as hell—you'll have to excuse me mam—but don't let that antique worship discourage you. You know well as me we have to kow tow a little before the shrine of the South. After you've bent the knee, they'll take you into the dining-room. And you'll sit down to a table set up in old southern-novel style. You'll drink out of a silver goblet and eat off of fine china and there'll be colored servitors bowing and scraping to make you feel like a big-bellied aristocrat, and handing you dream food. Yes mam. Dream food . . . chicken and turkey . . . braised mushrooms . . . asparagus with almonds . . . ham salad . . . oyster pie . . . watermelon preserves . . . brandied peaches . . . sweet potatoes and pecans . . . celery hearts . . . fluffy little biscuits tender as—now you got me, don't know what they're tender as . . . and a dozen more vegetables and salads, and then you finish off with ice cream and three kinds of cake, and a piece of pie and some coffee. After that, if I were you, I'd ask God to forgive me, and I'd find me a quiet spot in the

shade under a tree somewheres and sleep it off till sun-down. Then you go back to your car, get in and drive real slow through the twilight, because it's a pretty thing in that country, a twilight.

Maybe I'm Just Easy to Cry

Reckon you don't belong round here, do you, stopping like this to hear niggers sing. Sure it's all right! Stay long as you want to. Glad to have you. Won't you come in and sit a while? Sun's right warm here on the porch. Yes'm. Getting things ready for planting. Trying to. They say ground's awfully wet . . . So you're visiting around, seeing the South. Must be fine to have a trip like that. Always wanted to travel somewhere. Not much to see round here. You ought to go down to Natchez in the spring or down to New Orleans or Gulf Park. Yes'm. Fraid you didn't pick much when you came here. You don't happen to be from Georgia? You *are*? Always wanted to go to Georgia, ever since I read *Gone With the Wind*. Know you're proud to be a Georgian, to live in the same state with Margaret Mitchell . . . Say you like that song they're singing? . . . No'm, don't suppose it's got a name. Just what they sing when they're working. Ever hear a bunch of darkies sing "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"? Gosh . . . makes you feel queer. Makes you want to cry—don't know why—just want to cry. Now what's in a song like that to make you want to cry? Ever thought about it? Maybe I'm just easy to cry. Sit here of nights . . . on the porch . . . when they're singing down there at their cabins—always end up crying . . . like I'd been to a movie or something. Yes'm. Times always hard on a plantation. Most years. . . . I hope to go to college next year but Papa says not to count on it too much. Cotton hasn't gone up near what they expected when the war started. Folks thought it'd go high and we'd have a boom or something . . . Everybody round here felt real cheerful for a while. Mam? Yes'm. I'll probably teach. Bout all a girl can do unless she goes to New York or somewheres . . . Sometimes I've kinder thought I'd like to be a missionary. Yes'm. But with so many wars everywheres, don't reckon they've got much need for missionaries now. No'm . . . our farm's not so big. Yes'm, big for this part of the state but mighty little compared to the plantations down to Greenwood

and Greenville. Yes'm. You sure must go see some of them. Twenty, thirty thousand acres, some of them. Mam? Biggest one I reckon is the one at Scott, over on the river. There's a big one they say in Mississippi County, but that's in Arkansas. Yes'm. Nearly fifty thousand acres . . . eleven hundred nigger families on it. Yes'm. Does seem right big. No mam! Not a union in this county. Folks wouldn't stand for unions here. See we couldn't. Minute you let niggers start thinking they're running things . . . it'd be nothing but bad trouble. You've heard about the big man-hunt down in the swamp? Yes mam, down below Natchez. Biggest in years. Yes'm, they'll get him I reckon. Yes mam, I think so too—a lynching's a bad thing. But what you going to do when niggers kill people? There's so many of em—you got to keep them in their place, haven't you? Least that's what my dad says.

Break Their Hearts, Oh God. Give Them Tears

Break deh hearts oh God. Give um tears. Fill deh froats wiv sobbin cries and don let um hush. Don let um hush oh Gawd until dey feels deh sins. Rech down oh Gawd and break deh hearts. Break um all tuh pieces Gawd. Let a tears flow. Flow across da lan until da fences fall down. Flow across a delta. Flow across a past. Flow across a earth til it saved at last. Mek a ribber rise Gawd. Mek a floods come. High above a levees down tuh bottom lan. Wash away de doodlum, wash away de sto, wash away de chaingang, wash away a lynchin, wash away da ridin boss—*Lawd do dat for sho!* Rench out deh fears God, wash out deh hate. Git a hands clean of blood befo it too late. When deh hearts is broke Gawd, tek yo white chile up. Tell im hush his frettin. Tell im try an smile. Tell im he feel better in a liddle while. Tell im folks jes has tuh learn tuh treat his black brudder like a real fambly what belongs tuh one anudder. Tell im he been stubborn fo a long long while. Tell im better dry his face an try an smile. Tell im lot of work—don he want tuh do his share? Tell im loads been powerful heavy jes fo one tuh bear. [Winter 1939–40]

✻ Southern Conference?

[An Editorial]

No one aware of the tedious labor entailed in the successful organization and promotion of a convention can be unmindful of the earnest work done by those who were responsible for the second Southern Conference for Human Welfare held in Chattanooga in April.

And because many of them gave of their ideas and time and energies so generously and some in a spirit of such selflessness with no remote aim of furthering their own or their group's interest (indeed for these, quite the contrary would be the outcome) it may seem a little ungracious of a mere delegate to express any dissatisfaction.

And yet, if one stops to think, one remembers that this was no party with guest-obligations of writing a bread and butter letter, but a people's conference. And because it was a people's conference 'the people' should say freely and as honestly as they know how, through whatever medium they find available—as they did not have much opportunity of doing at the Conference—what they think of it and its immediate and potential value to the South. And in saying it, should not feel that they have either trespassed the bounds of good taste, or injured the welfare of the South.

When southern whites and Negroes gather together to confer about their mutual problems in democratic publicity and ease and friendliness and no Jim Crow stalks the aisles, something has happened of a significance in excess of the literal fact. It becomes not simply an unusual happening but a symbol of a changing South, a good South. And the fact that this happened at Chattanooga is to some of us like hearing the thin fine sound of horns across the hills. We know that we shall hear them again and we prize the knowledge.

Sitting there in that group, listening to those 46 long speeches, bemused by the odd and rather touching fact that most of us

southerners deep in our hearts long above everything else to be good oldfashioned preachers with a pulpit at our elbows, endless pews in front of us, and no program chairman to pinch off our eloquence,—I thought also of the profound emotional release which not only many of those speakers must be experiencing but many many listeners, in the simple act of hearing words spoken aloud, which if said ten years ago or even now in many of our home towns, would mean a dead man at the pay-off.

In the South where real democracy is about as common as a good cotton year and violence and intolerance grow in our back yards like weeds, these conference values of interracial friendliness and freedom of speech (limited in certain odd ways as the latter was) are not to be blacked out of our minds because we think also that we hear danger sirens. Nor must we in our haste forget the achievements of the civil liberties committee and the excellent publicity done by the poll tax committee. For these are considerable accomplishments and I as a southern citizen feel grateful to the men and women responsible for them.

But my disappointment in the Conference persists, and because I do not believe this disappointment to be either unique or based on quixotic assumptions, I should like to say more about it.

I must preface these dissenting opinions by warning you that I know very little about what happened at the Conference although I attended every session morning, afternoon and night. And while I confess to a certain hip-aching drowsiness which overtook me from time to time during those oratorical stretchouts, yet I do not believe that dullness alone will account for my ignorance. It seems to me to have more to do with geography. For the feeling persists that things happened at that Conference and I was not where they happened.

At any rate, little went on inside the auditorium save the speeches (and in all decency I must add that there were several brilliant speakers, any number of adequate ones, and one or two whose simplicity and honesty were deeply moving); a somewhat painful episode Sunday evening; the business session on Tuesday afternoon; and that evening, the awarding of a medal to Dr. Will Alexander (who deserves all citations that we southerners can think to give him); an admirable speech from him and an

equally admirable one by Dr. Frank Graham. In addition there were a few other and welcome divertissements. One was happy to hear Mrs. Roosevelt and though a bit disappointed in her formal speech the deftness of her replies to the questioners was pleasing. Then too, one's eye in a kind of mesmeric curvature kept following Maury Maverick through his interesting contortions and that in itself was no mean entertainment.

If I sound as if I take sacred things too lightly let me explain that it is a personality defect which I at times succeed in overcoming.

In all seriousness though, I believe that those who controlled the Conference while doing so with finesse and with perhaps the purest of motives, certainly with smooth results, unwittingly did the Conference harm. For instance, one kept hearing so many rumors. One picked up, in that grape-vine fashion which would surely be adjudged by trained investigators a highly unreliable method of obtaining facts, that the communists and socialists used up a good bit of their own and other people's time and emotion over whether Russia should or should not be rebuked (in resolution) by the Conference for her nasty snitch of Finland (sounds a little archaic, even now, doesn't it!) . . . that there was quite a din of axe grinding . . . that pressure groups collided with each other now and then . . . that everybody, or somebody, was very anxious that John L. Lewis not be criticised (odd about freedom of speech isn't it, how it goes in one hole and peeks out through another) that this . . . and that . . . and so on . . .

Trivia. Gossip. So what?

Well this, or so it seems to me: when nearly eight hundred southerners meet together in profoundly earnest mood to discuss the problems of the South and to search together for ways of meeting the South's needs, they should be given a decent chance of doing so. Neither chautauqua, nor washroom gossip, nor mezzanine politics seems a fitting substitute for actual participation by the mass of delegates in real discussions, in small group round-table talk, and on committees where they feel they are contributing more than a dollar and their presence. And this conference did appear to me to be a kind of hybrid of all three of the above-mentioned substitutes.

It has raised the question in my mind and in the minds of

other thoughtful southerners as to just what this conference is for? Is it the beginning of a new political party? Is it a kind of mass meeting of pressure groups and lobbyists where talents may be given the opportunity of more and varied conflicts on which to sharpen themselves? Or is it really what some of us think it should be: a conference of southern people, black, white, of all classes and economic levels, of all cultural textures, who meet together in a spirit of earnest and sincere disinterestedness to investigate social-economic conditions and to find ways of meeting the South's most pressing needs through democratic action? It seems to some of us that it should be a clearinghouse for our thoughts, opinions, dreams. It seems to us that not only it should have the function of finding facts and disseminating them, of finding methods of democratic action, but it should bear a heavy obligation to find means and techniques for securing the full participation of its delegates in a democratic way. For if we can not discover techniques for democratic participation for one thousand people in a three-day conference, how under heaven shall we ever work out democratic procedures throughout the South? It should analyze, criticize, suggest methods of social action, but one doubts that it should be in itself an instrument of direct action. Rather it should analyze and suggest ways and means which individuals may, if they desire, take back to their organizations for use. The conference should possess the objectivity and open-mindedness and intellectual discipline of social scientists, and the earthy common sense and vigor and energy of laborer and farmer. It can well use a little humor and the South possesses plenty. It can use the best manners New or Old South can scurry around and find, as an efficiency method of conducting discussions. It can use whatever philosophic perspective, subtlety and imaginative insight its members can offer. It can use criticism. It might even occasionally turn itself into an old-timey 'experience meeting.'

But in my opinion, there is no place in this conference for pressure groups, lobbyists, axe-grinders, methods of violence or suggestions of "you can't say that"—or of chicanery.

We who were born and have lived our lives in this old South know only too well that there is no tradition of objective analysis and self-criticism down in Dixie. We know that trouble and de-

privation and frustration (and we've had our share of all three) breed, not tolerance and understanding and skill in seeing the welfare of the whole as clearly as that of the part, but breed violence and self-interest, defensiveness and despair. We know that we have always had pressure groups but perhaps have not always belonged to the one that had the power. And we know what powerful pressure groups do to you if you get in the way of one. And what they do to you if you get in the way of two!

I heard an intelligent and warm-hearted young man high up in one of our government departments say only a few days ago that what the South needs is more and more pressure groups." Get in one," he exclaimed with ardent zest, "for that is democracy!"

That isn't democracy. Protection must be given minority groups against a majority it is true, but the majority must be protected from minority groups also and in a democracy the individual must always be able to lay his hands easily on his integrity. Lobbies, pressure groups, power politics whether used in Europe or Dixie are dangerous weapons which have a nasty little trick of going off at both ends; and though in the kind of representative government we have there seems to be a necessity for organization if one wants to be heard beyond one's front door, it is the weakness of our democracy and not its strength, something to be used with care and squeamishness, not a way of life to be cherished.*

And for the very reason that there are pressure groups, lobbies, and a growing sense of class in our South, we must not only hold to (and increase) a high degree of social mobility (as Dr. Conant recently suggested) breaking down classes into new classes as rapidly as they tend toward rigidity, making it easier and easier for men of all colors to move freely and know they have this chance of moving from class to class, perhaps "across" rather than "up" or "down," making it more difficult for wealth and power to become entrenched in certain family chromosomes, but (and this is more relevant to our discussion) we must hold to the concept that sometimes there is a higher social good than our own and our group's. I believe disinterestedness and the willingness and imaginative ability to concede this higher social good, while at the same time prizing individual integrity, to be the very

* I say this knowing too well that our problem in ethics is not shall we hate, but *what* shall we hate. [Original note.]

essence of democracy, just as I think it is the essence of emotional maturity in the individual. And I believe the acquisition of either calls for self-discipline.

And because I believe this, the idea of a thousand southerners of all races, economic groups, cultural levels meeting together each year to discuss with objectivity and honesty and tolerance each other's problems and the problems of the whole South, with no one elbowing for "first place," with all defences down, with a willingness and a patience to unravel complexities which have thus far defeated all of us in our separate ways, is a gallant Southern Dream and one none of us wants to see turn, from lack of forethought and safeguards and self-criticism into the old, old nightmare. [Spring 1940]

✿ Paw and the Rest of Us

Seven years ago Erskine Caldwell wrote a book about Jeeter which stimulated risibles or viscera of almost the entire English-speaking world. A few months ago John Faulkner, brother to William, wrote a better book about Paw* which will have about the same effect, with an added jab at the heart. *Men Working* is a cartoonist's job and a talented cartoonist did the job. It is incisive, shrewd, funny, gently cruel, and makes its point. Those who know "WP and A'ers" in rural sections will find nothing in the book that they did not already know, but almost all—not quite—that they do know. John Faulkner is Mississippi's David Low, as Mississippian as Low is British.

I've thought a lot about Paw lately. He's my neighbor as he is yours. And as I've gone about my work with southern facts Paw's travelled along, a shadow that will not let go. Looking at the South with Paw beside you is a curious and troubling thing but nowhere on the journey does Paw become so bothersome as at the mental hospitals. To explain this, we shall have to forget him for a time and look more closely at these institutions which often come so close to our own lives.

Most people will agree that there is something wrong with our mental hospitals, as they will agree—unless they wear red galluses—that there is something wrong with all our southern institutions. Just what this "wrong" is, some will say differently, but most will say "money." And one has only to study a few hospitals' annual reports to see that an elephantine obstacle blocking the modern psychiatric program *is* lack of money.

Money. Always in the South money is the booger-man under every State institutional bed, whether its occupant be a schizophrenic, a check forger, a young-man-in-search-of-a-degree or a child with delinquent parents. The State of Mississippi spends about 38 cents a day for the complete upkeep (including clothing)

* *Men Working*. By John Faulkner. Harcourt-Brace. \$2.50. [Original Note.]

of each patient at Whitfield (its most modern hospital). Last year, the Superintendent of the Alabama mental hospitals asked the Board in his annual report for \$4.00 per week per capita—an increase of 50 cents per week over the preceding year. The Georgia State Hospital has 7,661 patients but has only 18 psychiatrists on its staff and 26 graduate nurses. Arkansas State Hospital has 4,529 patients, 2 graduate nurses and 7 psychiatrists. "We have no money!" Always the same cry.

One sometimes wonders. The State of Mississippi spent less per day on each mental patient in 1939 than any other state in the Union but it has spent \$56,000,000 during the past three years on its highways. The State of Arkansas recently built for its chronic patients a badly needed hospital unit at a cost of several million dollars, but it still can afford no graduate nurse and only 3 doctors for the 2,000 patients housed here. That is a load of nearly 700 patients for each psychiatrist, more than four times the number allowed by the standards of the American Psychiatric Association. The State of Georgia recently erected some urgently needed buildings at Milledgeville at a cost of \$4,250,000.00 but still can afford only 18 doctors and 26 graduate nurses for its 7,661 patients, and has no facilities for those mental hygiene clinics throughout the state which would by education prevent a large percentage of the mental illness requiring hospitalization, and save the State enormous sums in money and human wealth. Yet Georgia's Highway Department in the past two years has spent on its roads \$47,000,000. North Carolina's mental hospitals, in a state so progressive in many respects, are conspicuous for their deficiencies of personnel-number, almost complete lack of social workers, of hydro- and physio-therapists, of recreational directors, the total absence of laboratories for pathology and research, and of out-patient clinics.

So it goes.

Mississippi has at Whitfield a most beautiful plant; attractive buildings, fine fields, dairy, orchard, a large library and some books, excellent (but not sufficient) equipment, charming flower gardens, the best occupational therapy set-up for men that we have seen in any southern hospital (that for women is not adequate). But without individualized care—which cannot be remotely considered with eight doctors and 14 nurses; without psy-

chiatric social workers to follow up cases outside, how can the resources of that plant even with Dr. Speck's almost miraculous economies, be adequately used in real remedial work? It is quite impossible.

Many of the hospitals which claim to have "occupational therapy" are so limited in occupational resources and purposeful guidance that it is silly to disguise by such a term the monotonous sewing and plowing and dishwashing that now go under that name.

Some hospitals do not have libraries and many which do, do not have trained librarians. None has an adequate number of books. (We were shown the professional library for the staff in one hospital and were interested to note that there were few volumes on psychoanalysis and not one by Sigmund Freud in the entire collection.)

In another state which we visited a little more than a year ago, we were shown around by a gentleman (close relative of the Governor) from the hospital office. Our guide, whose function and title were somewhat vague, was as ill-informed on the subject of modern psychiatry as anyone we happen to know. To him the hospital was a place, not dissimilar to the usual prison, in which inmates have to be "kept." For the approximately 1,800 patients in this newly built unit there were two resident doctors and no resident graduate nurse, according to our guide's information.

There was, however, one bright spot. We met the woman who had charge of the women epileptics. She is a middle-aged farm woman with less than high school training, but she has what no school gives: imagination. She told us her story. She said that she watched the epileptics—that being her job—day after day, pulling at their clothes, snatching at each other, moving aimlessly around. And one day she thought, "I'll give them some paper to tear, instead of each other." She did. The women tore paper and enjoyed it. She watched them a few more weeks. Then she had another idea. The basement was not being used for any purpose. She had never heard of occupational therapy but she went down to that basement, took a look, and said to herself "we can use that." She secured some croker sacks and permission from the doctor (who seems to be a fine, conscientious, able and

overworked man) and she fixed up her basement into a room where her women could unweave the croker sacks. She began to teach them to make things. Simple, crude articles. And then she found that they were not fighting and screaming so much. She decided they liked it. She hunted around, picked up here and there more bags and sacks and string, and her women made more things. Some of these she sold for them, bought materials, helped them make more articles. She took us down to her basement and showed us her work room. It was a fine thing to look at, that room; but the pride on her face is what we cannot forget. She said she hoped to get away soon to study "that occupational therapy" which she had, during those months, heard about. We stood there, talking little, looking at her room and those epileptics' handiwork, thinking of her and her dreams. She had herself financed that project, planned and directed it—all for "her girls." Millions of dollars for new buildings—and no occupational therapy until a poorly paid, untrained attendant comes along and creates occupational therapy out of croker sacks and strings . . . We stood in the twilight, looking at those beautiful new expensive buildings against the sky, watching the drab line of "inmates" filing down the path to supper; stood there thinking of our South and its ways. Our guide said he "sure was sorry that he had to hurry through our visit but the Governor was bringing a bunch out for a dinner party and he had things to do . . . of course we understood, didn't we, it being the Governor" . . .

In response to a question: "What facilities for music have you?" one psychiatrist wrote: "Small orchestra of patients, piano, radios or loud speakers on each ward and in central auditorium." He has a wry sense of humor and needs it—but with all deference to him (and he is a fine man indeed and one of the South's best) and to his learned colleagues, this writer cannot be easily persuaded that loud speakers on each ward are good mental therapy for even the most stable mind . . . A music therapist would go at it, we suspect, a little differently.

Thinking over these things, one wonders if the difficulty lies wholly in the lack of money. Our southern poverty is no illusion. It is a well publicized and painful fact. But isn't the crux of the matter perhaps something more profound which expresses itself

in the unimaginative and wasteful use of the little money we do have? Even if we had much more, would we spend it much more wisely?

There are in our southern hospitals some fine, courageous, intelligent psychiatrists struggling against heavy odds. And some of the best are in the institutions we've made conspicuous by naming. There are a few here and there to whom these pleasant adjectives do not seem to apply. But the villain in this psychiatric farce is the public. We know what we like. We have what we want. We pay our money and we take our choice. We roll up and down our hundred million dollar highways in our jalopies (if we're on WPA), in our Fords and Pierce Arrows (if we've made our money off of those on WPA); we pass each other on curves sharp enough to give our egos a big lift; and trust to God that neither we nor our folks will end up at Milledgeville (or Chattahoochee or Tuscaloosa or Raleigh or the others) though the statistical chances are that one in 15 of us will end up just there for at least 3 years if we don't reach the scrap heap first—or the county jail.

We operate as citizens in the South and throughout most of the U. S. A. on an infantile pleasure principle—not according to the requirements of reality. We snatch at what we want right now without regard for our wants tomorrow or our needs now or tomorrow. Poor and starving, sick and miserable as we are down here in Dixie, we spend hundreds of millions on great pavements and bridges spanning eroded lands which starve a third of our citizens and malnourish another fourth; we erect mammoth and spectacular school buildings at which we gawp like country come to town on Saddy—and pay those who teach in them an average of \$60.00 a month to "learn our younguns a little something." Columbia, Mississippi, has recently built a high school that cost \$127,401. It is beautiful. Jackson, Mississippi, recently built a junior high school that cost \$317,400. It also is beautiful . . . It would be fine if the South, a third of whose citizens live in shacks without sanitary privies, could afford such grandeur. It would be fine if we could remember the beauty of the Edward L. Bailey Junior High School (it is the most beautiful school this writer ever saw) and forget that Mississippi spends annually

\$38.96 per white school child and \$4.97 per black school child.* (Of course the blacks do not go to Bailey Junior High School.) We Georgians stick a three-million dollar prison down in our piney woods, fill it with the half-sick and old prisoners who can't be farmed out to county road gangs, and turn them over to the mercies of ignorant, poorly paid guards who have no more notion than a south Georgia gopher of the purpose of a modern penal system. Mausoleums to southern justice. Mausoleums to southern education. Once we built monuments to a dead Confederacy . . .

Down in Ft. Worth, Texas, there is a million-dollar Methodist church building, covering nearly a block with its offices and rooms for church activities. Down in the Texas of Dies and Garner how many of us would put our money on the future of any man who dared to live the social teachings of Jesus Christ?

We do not ask ourselves what is the purpose of our mental hospitals, our prisons, our schools and churches and then provide adequate program and personnel to carry out that purpose. Instead we build buildings, as expensive as our own delusions of grandeur and the cunning of contractors can contrive. There are no fees for the building trades and "the boys" in "adequate personnel and program." A partial explanation. Yes, but only partial. For always there is the shadow of Paw across our shoulder. . . .

We laugh when a "WP and A'er" grabs his first pay check from the government, makes a down-payment on a jalopy and goes whizzing around the curve with no thought of rent next week or food tomorrow. We laugh . . . but how much more wisely have we spent our government aid? We laugh or get angry at Caldwell's Jeeters and John Faulkner's Paws, but in our civic, religious, political, educational activities we have yet to show much more collective foresight and wisdom and realism than Jeeter and Paw showed in their small lives. Paw's shadow. We are one with Paw and Jeeter and in all honesty and good humor we may as well admit that we're their kinfolks. [Winter 1941]

* Mississippi pays its white teachers an average of \$750; its Negro teachers an average of \$237 per year. [Original note.]

✿ Are We Not All Confused?

[An Editorial]

A young Negro girl spoke at a recent gathering: "I am confused," she said. "To whom do I owe my loyalty? to my own people? to white America? to the darker races?"

A Tennessee paper laughed and called it the year's silliest question. (The Queen of France once laughed and made an immortal wisecrack and France paid for her laughter and that wisecrack, for the blindness of those in power, and is paying today for the same kind of blindness.)

There are 13 million Negroes in this country, not one of whom has his full Constitutional rights as a citizen. In some regions in certain cities, he is permitted many of these rights. In others he has few of them; in most rural regions he has none. In the South, the Negro loses out on all counts: education, health, recreation, housing, the vote, jobs both as to pay and kind, civil liberties, right of free movement, right to the courtesies of address which civilized countries accord citizens regardless of race and economic status.

Old facts . . . familiar to white minds, unknown to white feelings, are now lashing Negro minds and feelings into deeper confusion.

There is grave need for the white man and the black man in the South to understand each other. It is a necessity today for the intelligent white to use all the imagination he can lay hold of in an attempt to put himself in the Negro's place and learn *how it feels* to be there. It is as much a necessity for the intelligent Negro to try to understand the cultural and psychic factors which cripple the best of white southerners.

For patterns of discrimination and segregation to which the white man is so accustomed that he deems it his American "right" to impose them at pleasure upon the Negro take on razor edge now as they are carried into the war effort.

For 80 years, in legal freedom, the American Negro has en-

dured these patterns. Not as slave but as American citizen he now asks this question: *when will the patterns be changed?* He believes that the government which requires him to pay taxes and conscripts his sons to fight its war owes him democracy's privileges as well as its duties. He believes quite simply that as a citizen he has an inalienable right to protest the nation-wide denial of his Constitutional freedoms. He believes that except for the vote (which he does not have in the South) the right to protest is the only peaceful method of free peoples to correct the wrongs done them. It is a method in good repute among democracies. It is the American way of helping citizens in trouble. The Negro press is now using this way to tell the country of Negro needs. Through its press, the Negro race is asking for the freedoms the United States says it believes in. And the race has been answered that the time is not "right."

When will the time be "right"? and "right" for whom?

The Negro wants to know.

These are questions which bore deep into the core of American democracy. They are questions to be answered; not questions to be dismissed by hush-hush campaigns, or avoided by talks on morale, or settled by white men calling in Negro leaders, closing doors, and laying upon Negro shoulders the heavy burden of responsibility for averting "race trouble."

Nor are they answered by the loud accusations of Westbrook Pegler, or the more restrained but as unfair rebukes of Virginius Dabney and John Temple Graves (both of whom in peace time made honorable efforts in defense of the Negro)—who seem to feel that attempts to increase racial democracy while fighting a war for democracy are not only irrelevant but dangerously inciting; who accuse the Negro press of exploiting the war emergency to stir up race issues, of being (in Pegler's words) "reminiscent of Hearst at his worst in their sensationalism and their obvious inflammatory bias."

It is a confused situation in which intelligent men who have shown their good will by past actions are now behaving as if driven by stupidity. (One makes no defense of Mr. Pegler. His words too often betray perverse resistance to change and incomprehension of human needs for one to believe in either his good will or his intelligence.) But there is need to explain, if one

can, the actions of Mr. Dabney and Mr. Graves—not only because of friendly feelings for them and admiration for their past achievements, but because they stand as symbol of all southern liberals. They are of the “best element” in southern culture; of the group whose strengths have helped build a better South in peace-time but whose weaknesses may now be its (and the country’s) undoing. No one can question these liberals’ integrity or good intentions. Then why, in time of need, have they failed so completely to understand the Negro’s position? How can they fail to see that were they black they would surely protest their humiliations, that their manhood would cry out in loud shame against the discriminations imposed upon them?

It is not easy to understand the white southern liberal (and his northern brother) torn as he is by cultural ambivalences. But let us try:

Under stress men tend to revert to early patterns of behavior. Those who are observant recognize this in the regressive habits of childhood: thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, baby talk, crying, tantrums, upon which children fall back so easily when hard pressed by reality. In adult psychic disturbances, one sees regressions more severe and more “shocking” but of a similar nature. Whether one is mentally ill or healthy, one’s behavior under stress is trued to the same basic principles. White southerners are rigorously trained in childhood to believe in their whiteness. They are trained in distinctions, segregations, special privileges, as they are trained in their toilet habits. Among the upper classes this training takes on a highly specialized character with subtleties, nuances baffling to those not reared in a bi-racial caste system. As southern children grow older the more intelligent and economically secure among them (and some of the “rebels”) tend to reject much of this early conditioning when it is subjected to the checks of common sense and scientific knowledge; and the *more crude* of their race superstitions retire to childhood’s shadow to lurk there with other wishful fantasies. But no white child reared among Negroes ever forgets in his heart the sweet power of being “superior.” His early belief in white-skin superiority is still there, waiting for the propitious moment of race-strain, to seize its old throne in the middle of reason from which once it was firmly ejected.

Much confusion today among southern liberals is nothing more or less than a surrender under stress to the pull of old childhood patterns of behavior. Even though the mind can not confess it, the emotions have capitulated.

A second cause of confusion springs out of the South's finest tradition: the attempts of individuals to soften for other particular individuals the harsh effects of the southern system. This tradition at its best however is no more than the habit of bestowing largesse of money and spirit upon one's "inferiors." It is a generosity—but it is also the bringing of gifts for which one expects payment in gratitude—"furnish" jotted down in the commissary book of our memories as a debt to be paid not in kind but with very high interest. Many good white people who have helped the Negro are deeply hurt that he will not now repay their help by refraining from embarrassing the white race while it is "in this emergency." Stated so briefly, this may smack of the ridiculous. Rub your mind on it a little and you will feel a nub of truth there. The common complaint, "this is not the right time," betrays the liberal's mistaking for "christmas" the Negro's basic claim to democracy.

A third element in this chaos is the unarticulated fear of reprisal that springs surely from a profound guilt for our treatment of the Negro. We know that the privileged and powerful groups among white men have used the Negro as strike-breaker, as the undertow to pull down and keep down wages, as the post which the poor white can kick when in need of kicking; all these—as well as a strop on which to sharpen their own race pride. It is an old saying that the only way the white man can keep the Negro in the ditch is to stay down there with him. It would be more true to say that the only way the powerful whites have kept the poor whites in the ditch has been by holding the Negro down there *below* them. Whether or not southern liberals have participated directly in this exploitation they have profited directly from it and have been accessories to the fact by their conforming to the southern customs which make such exploitation easy. Hence the unease and fear which we all share, knowing our responsibility for the evils.

This southern race-conditioning, so subtly involved by guilt-feelings, is a profound handicap to reason, crippling the South's

efforts toward intelligent action. There are white men in America willing to risk losing the war, if race equality and bread-and-butter democracy are the alternatives. Though few, they are powerful. However, our real danger today lies not in the deliberate sabotage of the war effort by these few but in a falling back of the people upon conditioned reflexes which are not valid responses to the present situation—however successfully they may have served other purposes.

All the Negro wants in this war is to be permitted to do his full share toward winning it, not as an outcaste, an Untouchable, given untouchable chores to attend to, but as a self-respecting decent American citizen functioning usefully within the democratic pattern. All he is now asking is for his Constitutional rights in this democracy. If this be treason . . . as some liberals say . . . the liberals can make the most of it. And are likely to do so—unless the creative way, the constructive, intelligent and *new* act is attempted.

There is such a way for white men who seek it. It is not an inexorable necessity for us to make one of the deadly and automatic choices: shutting eyes, ears, mouths in appeasement of the demagogues and Negrophobes among us; or asking Negroes to appease their exploiters for white men's sake; or arousing by words the ignorant whites to mob violence.

There is another way: by act, word, newspaper column, editorial, speech, sermon, in quiet reason with friends, public opinion can be created by liberals and labor to accept the Negro in democracy, as public opinion has been created to accept this war. Suggest that the old days have passed; that as war strategy it is the wise thing now, the "hard necessity" perhaps, but the only course to follow both for winning the faith of other peoples across the seas and for strengthening our inner defenses; that it is the inevitable direction which we must take to find a way out of our American troubles and the sooner we take it, the better.

There are ten liberal southern newspaper men who have enough influence to so turn the tide of southern opinion that the people would not seize upon the destructive solution, seeing no other, but would quietly accept the inevitable and creative way if it were pointed out by these leaders. The vast majority of white southerners are neutral people (as is true the world over of

people) eager neither to harm nor to help anybody. And being also an unstable people are highly suggestible, easily influenced by leaders. The racists among them, the Negrophobes, the demagogues, some delta planters and a few vested interests who try to fight back the approach of democracy by beating it over the head with the Negro's body might not be appeased by their words. But maybe the Federal government in war time could lay a cool hand on hot tempers.

If the liberals in the South do not turn to the constructive act, if they continue to "solve" deep fundamental conflicts by silence and evasion, pep talks, quiet pressures, or by criticism of Negroes who are attempting to pull their race toward freedom, much of the responsibility for the violence which may result will be theirs—as it has been theirs in the past.

It is well for us all to realize that danger of inciting to race violence does not lie in the *speaking* but in speaking *against* the Negro instead of *for* him, as analyses of race riots show. It would be wise to remember that riots are caused by social and economic conditions, not by the reasoned publicizing of these conditions or attempts to right them. Intelligent southerners cannot afford today to confuse cause with effect. Incitement to violence does not spring from a sane creating of public opinion to deal democratically with the Negro but from inflammatory talk of sex, rape, Pure Womanhood and "menace."

Liberal southern journalism learned its bitter lesson about rape and womanhood, took an oath of silence, and now fears to break it. It has not yet learned that silence itself in times of race strain may be just as dangerous as sex words. But when the silence is broken, let it be broken by creative reason and justice, not—as has been done already in a few instances—by attacks on the Negro for using his democratic right to free speech. Somehow we must realize that such criticism also encourages violence, for to the ignorant and willful of both races it seems to stamp approval on the making of trouble by white men.

We white liberals cannot in honesty blame the demagogues for stirring up "race trouble"; nor can we in decency accuse Negro leaders of exploiting the war emergency. We do our full share of both by our faintheartedness, our covering up of actual conditions, our personal snobbery, our selfish habit of putting private

affairs, state politics, business interests and desire to be "gentlemen" ahead of deep fundamental human needs.

If we profoundly believe the Negro is as important as the white man, that his happiness and security are as essential as ours, we shall not be so quickly alarmed about "race trouble" by which is meant trouble for the white man. The Negro is always in trouble, a trouble which does not seem to disturb many white people until the contagion spreads from the Quarters to White Town.

[Spring 1942]

✻ Portairt of the Deep South Speaking to Negroes on Morale

How to say them:

*Begin on an
indulgently
friendly tone*

The Words:

Listen, colored folks,
listen to me:
this is a time for unity!
This is no time to be raising your hand
with questions about our native land!

Firmly

Niggers—this is war!
Don't you know we're fighting to keep a
world free
(for those who now own it—my folks and
me!)

*Chest tone will
give throbbing
effect*

You ought be thankful you live in a place
where folks can *talk* of God
and democracy
and freedom
and liberty
and—(let's see, what's another?
yeah, that thing about
brother—)

Yeah, you oughta be thankful just to hear
the white race
talk of brotherhood—
you oughta be thankful—*and stay in your
place!*

*Speaker should
smile warmly*

Listen, colored folks,
this is a time for unity.

*Boss-man tone
will add vigor
here*

Listen to me;
stop this fifth-column-talk about wanting
to vote

this hitler-propaganda about discrimination
 this japanese-whine concerning segregation
 in the army
 in the navy
 in defense jobs
 in the air!

Don't you know there's enemies listening
everywhere!

*Put iron in voice
 and jut out jaw*

Don't you know defeatist talk about Jim
 Crow
 is exactly the kind of talk that pulls morale
 down low?

*Speaker's voice
 should rise
 hysterically and
 his face should
 flush a deep purple*

And for God's sake stop asking us to call
 you mister!
 (You think I'd want a nigger to marry my
 sister?)

*Quietly
 rebuking*

Listen, colored folks,
 you ought to be thankful you have a claim
 to be called American (even in name!)

*Tense and hushed
 now as when you
 tell children about
 the boogah-man*

Suppose the Japs ruled you—
 how would you fare? Think of Korea!
 would you like to be there?
 Would you like to be in Germany?
 There're things a sight worse than those
 nazis could do
 than we folks down South have thought up
 to do.

Niggers—that's true!

*If audience seems
 a little apathetic
 orator might try
 saying words
 rapidly with
 slurring effect*

Things worse than lynchings
 and not having jobs
 and riding freight elevators
 and no education
 and segregation
 and eating and travelling Jim Crow.
 That's so!

Worse than making cotton crops to stay in
 debt
 worse than commissaries
 and folks not calling your mother Mrs.
 and yessiryesmamthankymam
 til your spirit's broke
 and having to laugh a big belly laugh
 when they tell a nigger joke. . . .
 There's things those Japs and Germans
 could think of to do
 that'd make these little things seem like
 democracy to you.

*Voice blares here,
 loud-speaker style*

*Red suspender
 snapping and a
 little tobacco
 spitting would
 make nice
 accompaniment*

THIS IS WAR! COLORED FOLKS!
 WHERE'S YOUR UNITY!

This fool equality
 you keep whining about
 equal votes
 equal education
 equal chance for jobs and pay
 equal chance for children to
 play—

these little things you call America's foun-
 dations
 don't you know they're interior *decora-*
tions?

*Voice a bit
 irritated for
 audience may
 seem dumb*

When your house is on fire, put the fire out,
 fool!
 (Don't rush around trying to save the hu-
 man beings in it!
 It's the property that's important—don't
 you know it!)

You say you're confused?
 That's strange—when *my* mind's so clear!

*Sensible, sane,
 commonsense
 inflection*

All you gotta do is fight for what *I* hold
 dear.
 I can't see what's so hard for you to face!

Do what you're told to do and *stay in your place*
leave everything else to the dominant race.

*Ominous tone
creeps into voice*

There're things worse than sharecropping
democracy
in a sweet eroded land of liberty—
there's things—we gotta have unity!

*Suddenly voice
grows reassuring
and light*

Listen, colored folks:
white folks will look after you.
All these agitators
all this fifth column talk—this—

*Chuckle here over
this old folk-joke
(Senator Rankin's
chuckle is effective;
might imitate)*

You never heard of a good nigger whose
white folks didn't look after him, did
you?
or a bad nigger who wasn't looked after
also, did you?
sure! we folks down here understand each
other,
don't we? sure! and we like each other and
stand
by each other! sure! and none of them
furriners
going to cause trouble between us, no
sirree!

*Voice soothing
and softly
southern*

Now how about a little singing?
huh? how about some of your good old
songs? nobody
can sing like a darky great singing yeah I
never
hear it it don't make me think of my old
mammy
singing to me when I was a kid God bless
her nothing
like those old mammies God bless em all
now sing me a song—

*Tone cordial and
encouraging but
with undertone of
impatience*

What's wrong?
Come on folks! Don't be so slow!
just anything will do *nobody knows de
trouble I've seen or swing low sweet chariot
or deep river or sometimes I feel like a
motherless child.*

*Eyes moist,
voice reverent*

And after you've sung your fine old songs
let's stand and sing *God Bless America*
and when you get home, fall on your knee
and thank God for this great democracy
for liberty
 and unity
 and
the others (whatever they are)
and for
making us all brothers (only in Christ of
 course like they say in church)

*Voice again
confident and
very encouraging*

Who said anybody's morale was low?
Folks who say it don't know what's so.
Do they? Course they don't!
A man who'd raise such a hue and cry
 oughta have his skin branded with
 a big
 black
 LIE!
Ain't that right, folks?

*and only a
little worried*

Come on, darkies, time to start a song
time to open your mouths now and bellow
 out strong
and show the whole world you as good
an American
as we are
and you'll fight to the last drop
of your blood
for us
 (but stop that fool complaining
 about Red Cross separating it

you know they can't mix white and
nigger blood!)

*Voice booms and
booms more and
more and more
victoriously*

Yeah, we'll fight, you'll fight
and we'll fight
to the last Jim Crow drop
to rid the world of Hitlerism
and Nazism
and all them OTHER ISMS
and save the American Way
so that things can go on forever
and ever
and
ever
just as they are
down
here
today.

[Spring 1942]

✿ Addressed to Intelligent White Southerners

“There Are Things To Do”

There are things to do now in the South, things that we all can do to bring ease to the tension felt throughout our region.

Somehow we must believe this. Believing it, we shall break the spell we have put upon ourselves. We know that a man can paralyze his own body. Torn by his hates and his loves, his conscience and his desires, his fears, his guilt, a man can lock himself in a grip like death and become a thing like the dead.

There are forces in the South today that are free of this paralysis:—powerful forces of industry and finance and agriculture, economic exploiting forces which have no doubts, no inner conflicts. They know what they want. Childlike, savagelike, ruthlessly, they go after it; without scruples to hamper them, without conscience cluttered with guilt and good-will to sap their energies, with no long-range wisdom to trip them up with its questions. . . .

But the rest of us? The rest of us who do not directly profit by race tension, who do not directly profit by economic exploitation or are not wholly weakened by it, are for the most part, paralyzed;—not daring to face and acknowledge our unconscious desires, our indirect gains from these more ruthless activities of the ‘powers,’ and our identification with white supremacy; nor daring to turn the other way and face the necessities of survival itself and the implications of that good-will which we now use to shield us from the future and its new patterns.

How curiously right we are as we rationalize our inactivity! We intuitively hit upon the core of the matter when we say, as so many of us southerners of good-will now say: “We dare not do this good thing for fear of doing some harmful thing also.” With these words we, unknowingly, turn a light on the depths of our souls, exposing our basic ambivalence of feelings. With these

words, we remain loyal to the strict, steel-like code to which we, since birth, have been trained to bend.

If some malevolent creature, some powerful and cruel and calculating and highly intelligent force had deliberately sought—in order to freeze all ‘good’ southerners into inaction—the exact propaganda, the one argument that we would find irresistible, he could not have chosen more shrewdly, more cleverly, than we have chosen for ourselves, or our families have chosen for us. “If I do this decent thing” we say, “. . . this democratic act . . . if I speak out now as a humane, civilized being, I shall undo the good that has been done, I shall set back progress . . . I shall turn the forces of violence against the Negro himself . . . I shall do harm . . .” a never-ending southern wail, like the cry of a lost child.

From childhood to old age, the sensitive white southerner whips himself with this cutting fear of doing harm until, humane impulses worn out, decency exhausted, courage bruised and flabby, he learns to move through his southern way of life like some half-dead thing, doing as little harm (and as little good) as possible, playing around the edges of great life issues, blinding himself to the ever-increasing misery, the ever-increasing frustration which his very lethargy is bringing to his land.

We need to open our eyes and look about us. We need to stare at the naked misery of our people, at the gullied land and gullied culture, until our imaginations begin to see what we have done to all our people and ourselves by *not* acting. We need to assess the damage that we are responsible for, we need to tell that total deficit over and over to ourselves, rubbing it in like salt until it stings us into action.

Yes . . . there are things to be done. Some so simple, so unrequiring of courage, that even the most timid among us can safely do them. There are other tasks exacting more imagination than bravery, more energy than sacrifice that can be done also, without causing ‘race riots’ and violence, or even great inconvenience to one’s self. And there are other jobs that must be done but can be done only by the brave who possess, along with their courage, skill and intelligence and resourcefulness.

Whatever our reasons for wanting to act: whether we are

stirred by love for our South or love for democracy; by our shame at being a party to injustice, our desire to win the war, or our belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ; whether by vision of a new world in which all men of all races will have an equal chance for food and freedom, or fear of a race riot in our home town;—whatever our reasons for wanting to ease race tension, there are things we can do NOW.

The Simple, Undramatic Things We All Can Do:

1. We can give ourselves a first-aid course on the South. We can learn where the racial pressure-points are. We can learn the names of the economic groups who have a stake in race tension and are exerting pressure to keep the white man and the black man afraid of each other. We can assess the power of this pressure. We can learn to understand our region, how it functions, what its laws are, how to change them. We can learn how sick it is, the significance of its symptoms, where its strength lies. We can do this by reading a few books, *now*. Not next year, but now. Raper and Reid's *Sharecroppers All*; Embree's *Brown America*; Vance's *Human Geography of the South*; Charles Johnson's *Growing up in the Black Belt*; Franklin Frazier's *The Negro Family in the United States*; Davis and Gardner's *Deep South*; Powdermaker's *After Freedom*; Belfrage's *South of God*; Pope's *Millhands and Preachers*; Wright's *12 Million Black Voices*; the well edited *Negro Caravan*; Cash's *Mind of the South* are some of the books worth your reading. Then read Nehru's *Toward Freedom* which, though written by a Hindu about India, is one of the best books on the white man and the black man in the South that has ever been published. Get familiar with Odum's *Southern Regions*. Learn to use it. There are ten thousand facts in it we all need to know and ponder.

2. (a) Let's urge every southerner to stop using the words 'nigger,' 'darkie,' 'coon.' Stop telling 'nigger jokes.' They're not very funny these days except to the Germans. Little things? Yes. But the little things do as much as the big things to wear out the Negro's nerves. Sand-paper rubbing hard against black hearts. . . .

(b) Use courtesy titles when speaking to educated Negroes or about them. Some day when the world becomes democratic and

civilized, surely we shall accord courtesy titles to all human beings regardless of skin color or the wages they make. We can begin now in a small way by conferring upon Negro college presidents, teachers, ministers, lawyers, community leaders, artists, the simple decent word "Mr." or "Mrs." or "Miss."

3. Write a letter to your newspaper (not to be published—if you wish it so) suggesting that Negro jokes be avoided in its pages for the duration of the war at least, that courtesy titles be used for living Negroes as well as for dead ones. (Some of the Georgia papers now give courtesy titles in obituary notices of Negroes but to no live ones. The technique being, apparently, that you feel the body and if it's cold, you can safely call him 'Mister'.)

4. In conversations with friends, make a point of suggesting how ridiculous you think it is for southern whites who pride themselves on their manners to refuse to use the courtesy titles when speaking of or to Negroes. How familiar and intimate it is to dare call a strange Negro by his first name. Make a point of suggesting that 'nigger jokes' are bad taste in war-time (of course they are excessively bad taste at all times); that they are hurting morale both of Negroes here and our colored allies across the seas. Suggest how difficult it must be for Negro mothers to give their sons to a jim-crow army and then be pushed around by us at home; how torn and conflicting must be their feelings of patriotism and race pride and justice; how injurious to morale is it when whites make unfair demands of Negroes in the buses and trains and street cars.

5. Spend a little time thinking. Thinking how it must feel to be a Negro in our South today. How it must feel to be jim-crowed on buses, on street cars, in dining cars, in theaters, in elevators, in churches, in schools, hotels, restaurants, in the armed forces, in jobs. How it must feel to be a Negro college president and have to walk up 22 flights of stairs in an office building to meet the white chairman of one's board because you won't be jim-crowed into a freight elevator. (An incident which occurred recently in Atlanta.) You will not lose your friends, nor your prestige, nor your job nor will you cause a race riot, by thinking . . . thinking about the Negro and the white man in the South in 1942.

6. (a) Write a few letters. Write to several southern radio sta-

tions urging that southern Negro colleges be invited more frequently to put on programs, that Negro speakers and artists when announced be accorded courtesy titles, that Negroes be invited to participate in the forums which many radio stations promote. *Few white southerners have ever heard an educated Negro speak a word.* Yet there are 55,000 Negro college graduates.

(b) Write to your newspaper and suggest that photographs of Negroes be published: Negro heroes in the armed forces, Negro artists and scientists, and educators, and others who have achieved to a newsworthy level. *Many white southerners have never seen a well dressed Negro.*

7. If you are unable to speak out publicly for racial democracy, or to write for publication, or to act democratically before others, there is still something you can do. Commend those who do these things which you don't dare do. Praise your minister for his sermon on brotherhood (or hint to him that it's about time to preach one). Write your editor and commend him for that democratic editorial (or suggest to him that it is time to write one); subscribe to the magazines which are trying to do a good job for democracy in war time. Ask your librarian for books on race, on the South, on economics, on world affairs. See that she buys them if she hasn't them already in your library. Give money to those agencies in the South that are working for economic betterment of sharecroppers and wage earners, that are working for stronger and better labor unions, that are working for racial democracy, for southern health, for the repeal of poll-tax voting laws, that are working for civil liberties.* All of these are working toward good ends;

* Some of these are the Southern Workers Defense League, Palmer Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.; the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, Presbyterian Bldg., Nashville, Tennessee; the American Civil Liberties Union, 170 Fifth Ave., New York City; the Southeastern Cooperative League, Carrollton, Ga.; the Fellowship of Reconciliation, 2929 Broadway, N. Y. C.; the Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Ave., New York City; the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, Standard Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.; the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, Standard Bldg., Atlanta, Ga.; the Y. W. C. A. in most southern cities; the Y. M. C. A. in a few; Highlander Folk School, Monteagle, Tenn.; the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen, Norris, Tennessee; National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax, Washington, D. C.; the National Urban League (in most large southern cities); the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 69 Fifth Ave., New York City. [Original Note.]

some use better means and wiser means than do others. All are worthy of your encouragement.

8. There is another thing which any well-bred white man or woman can do. It is in the best tradition of the South. Seek out among the Negro race a few individuals with whom you can become good friends. You can easily find many that are equal to you in education, intelligence, appearance, charm, ability, social poise, sensitive good-breeding. The great chasm between the two races must be bridged—for the sake of “winning the war,” for the sake of building a prosperous good South, for the sake of peace and the new world order, for the sake of our own souls. This bridging is not a great engineering feat to be done sometime in the dim future, ‘after the war,’ ‘some day,’ ‘when the time is right’ . . . it is every man’s job, white and Negro, *to do now*. The chasm is deep but it is not so wide that a man can not reach across it and take the hand of a man on the other side.

b. Read a Negro’s book or his articles; then write him a letter. Write an artist, a singer, an actor and tell him of your appreciation of his work. Visit a Negro college, university center, or public school or health clinic. Meet some of the Negro leaders there. Then keep in touch with them.

9. Subscribe to a Negro magazine or a Negro newspaper. Remember as a white person in the South you likely know very little about any Negroes except those who have worked for you in some menial position. *Phylon*, published at Atlanta University, Atlanta, Ga.; the *Crisis*, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York; *Opportunity*, 1133 Broadway, New York City; the *Atlanta World*, Atlanta, Ga.; the *Black Dispatch*, Oklahoma City, Okla.; *Journal and Guide*, Norfolk, Virginia, (the first a quarterly, the next two monthlies, and the others newspapers) are representative papers. All will give you information about Negroes, what they are thinking and feeling and doing these troubled days. At first, your white pride will be hurt, perhaps. You may find yourself angry and defensive at the Negro press for daring to laugh at white folks and daring to criticize them. But if you are a decent person, you will gradually begin to see that they have a right to their own opinions and their opinions are often right; that the violent words sometimes used are a violence we usually are responsible for; that sometimes they, too, exploit the race issue just as do white news-

papers. But if you want to know what kind of people Negroes are, how it feels to be a Negro in war time, read their papers and their books.

10. Whenever you have a chance of not being segregated, quietly take it. Such as sitting by a Negro on bus or street car, or standing by a Negro in an elevator. A 'gesture'? Yes . . . but a gracious one.

11. Pay your cook more. Shorten her hours. Treat her with more consideration. She is not your slave. Remember, she owes you nothing. On the contrary, you are probably heavily indebted to her for many work-hours she has given you free. Remember this is 1942 and we live in an American democracy. She has the right to organize her group if she wishes, the right to belong to a union if she wishes, and to demand better pay and better working conditions. Don't expose your ignorance by exposing your irritation at her for acting intelligently. *You* may bring on a race riot, if you arouse other whites by your protests.

12. Work through whatever means you have, for the abolition of the poll tax for voting; for the abolition of the white primary; for non-segregation in the armed forces, for non-discrimination in defense jobs and in labor unions; for a federal law against lynching; for the removal of segregation laws from southern state codes. Whatever else you can or can't do, you can always write letters to your congressmen, your governor, and your President. And letters are powerful. You can always contribute a little money to the agencies working toward these ends, such as the Southern Workers Defense League, the Southern Electoral League (Richmond, Va.), the National Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax, and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare.

13. Write your present governor and tell him that you do not like fascistic statements about White Supremacy; that you do not like discrimination against Negroes in schools and defense jobs, in mental hospitals and training schools; that you want racial equalization of teachers' salaries.

Write Gene Talmadge and tell him that you do not approve of either his race manners or of the Vigilante, Inc. Will it do good? A thousand letters would make any politician hold his head—in Georgia, or Alabama, or Mississippi. Five thousand letters

would probably kill out Vigilante, Inc. before it begins to breathe regularly.

14. Find for yourself some racial project that fits your temperament and talents. Negro health, adequate hospitalization, maternity centers are among the South's most glaring needs; training schools for Negro youth (the only decent one is in Kentucky); church interracial group projects; Negro housing; the Negro's recreational needs; library facilities for the colored race; the abolition of the poll tax and white primary; mental hospital facilities; —all of these and many more are waiting your energy, your imagination, your good-will.

These are simple, undramatic, decent, individual acts, none of which is too difficult for the average white southerner to undertake. None of them is in bad taste. None will entail loss of job, social ostracism, curtailment of your "usefulness," violent uprising, or sacrifice. But done by tens of thousands of southern individuals they would change the South. And the change would begin to take place where it must take place first: in a man's own heart and mind. If you want to have a part in making a good, creative South that will fit in harmoniously with the new world that our boys are dying for, this is the time, now, to begin.

There Are Other Things to Be Done:

Things to be done that will require more imagination, more energy, and more of your time. Not any of them entails sacrifice or humiliation or much courage. But you can feel justly proud of your contribution to democracy if you do them:

1. We can all begin to train our children now to be, not little Nazis, but democratic world citizens. We owe this to them, in order that they may adjust harmoniously and without psychic conflict to the new world democracy which we now dream about and know is coming toward mankind.

We can train them in good racial manners; to respect all people regardless of race or economic status; to oppose injustice, whether economic, racial, sexual, political or psychological. We can avoid those frustrations of spirit in childhood that prepare the emotional soil for aggression. We can train them to do long-range

planning, to think of ends and means as one continuous process of indistinguishable quality. We can give them a sensitive appreciation of human personality. We can make them fearless of new ideas. We can give them awareness of their identification with all children of the whole earth.

If we fail to do these things, our southern children will have a painful time adjusting themselves to the new life ahead of them, almost as difficult, perhaps, as it will be for the little German children. For our southern white children now are not prepared emotionally and intellectually for democracy. To practice it would seem a strange and alien thing to many of them, as well as to their parents.

2. Members of school boards can make magnificent contributions now to world peace and human understanding by putting into their school system books which will build appreciation and understanding, develop global attitudes of mind, stretch imaginations and loyalties to include the whole earth and its needs. The most fascinating projects in world democracy can be developed from kindergarten on through high school. Unit courses will have to be worked out; pamphlets written; new text books composed. And the Negro will have to be included in this world family we acquaint our children with. Think of the sheer adventure of working out a curriculum for our Georgian, our Southern, our American, children who are also to be citizens in a world democracy!

3. Due to crowded war conditions, transportation has become a symbol of the white man's injustice to the Negro. It is not the Negro's fault, remember, that he is now forced into buses and trains and street cars in such large numbers. Gas rationing, lack of tires have taken from him the one way he had of traveling in safety and security. Now he is forced into the vehicles which he has so long avoided. Remember also, that a Negro who has a son in the army defending American democracy or a brother or husband there is not going to be willing to be pushed and shoved around by us white folks without making a protest. The Negro race is a sane, stable race of people who have under trying conditions proved themselves strong and creative and wise; but they are at present subjected to as severe psychic strain as a people ever had to endure on the face of the earth. Their nerves give way, as do ours; their frustrations reach the place where self-

control is not always master. They get to the point where they just can't take any more. Even as you and I would do.

The Axis nations have agents in our country to promote conflict and violence. They move from place to place seeking the sensitive areas, the crowded places, the trouble spots. If these agents can promote trouble, why can not we have agents too (or become 'agents' ourselves) to *ease* trouble? *Trouble-shooters for democracy*. . . . Well-bred southern white women are especially suited for such roles. A bus driver who speaks undemocratically to a Negro passenger can be quietly rebuked by a white southern woman. Due to our southern defensiveness, it might not be wise for a northern woman or man to attempt it, but any white southern woman of tact and dignity can protect a Negro passenger on train or bus or street car, can ease tension and avoid incidents—with no harm to herself and with assurance of no bad effects upon the Negro race.

Not long ago a southern woman from Atlanta was traveling in a bus to Columbia, S. C. A white man entered, saw the only vacancy to be a seat beside a Negro woman, called to the bus driver "to make that nigger woman move to the back seat." The Negro woman said that she could not sit on the back seat because she was not well. The bus driver urged her to move; the white man insisted, and everyone in the bus began to feel uneasy and tense. The white woman from Atlanta quietly stood up, offered her seat to the white man and sat down beside the Negro woman. Everyone in the bus was grateful to her and shamed. Many showed their gratitude; the bus driver thanked her. (God knows all bus drivers must be sick of the incidents unless they are confirmed sadists!) Such an act requires imagination and sympathy, tact and good-breeding but many southern women have these in abundance. It is time now to use such gifts in fields where they are so badly needed.

Every such act, whether of white southern women, or men, is a triple victory for racial democracy, for Christianity and for the United Nations in this war. It is also in the best southern tradition of Jefferson and Robert E. Lee.

b. In department stores, shoe stores, there are chances to speak out when a clerk is rude to a Negro patron. It would be easy also for the women's clubs, missionary societies, Junior Leagues, and

such organizations as the League of Women Voters to boycott, or express by letter strong disapproval of, stores and shops which jim-crow Negro patrons or discriminate against them.

4. It is very needful that occasions be made to bring together not only individuals but *groups* of educated whites and Negroes. Clubs can ask Negro artists, doctors, writers, specialists of one kind or another to speak of their work or of some special project. Most clubs are in a position to do this.

b. In every city and town there are a number of intelligent white citizens and Negro citizens who can come together in a Southern Council for Democracy, similar to the older interracial cooperation groups but with a 1942 program, to discuss mutual problems in war time and to devise ways to bring economic and political and racial democracy to the South. After the first 'shock,' gradual steps could be taken to make the meeting a genuine occasion for good comradeship.

c. Every high school in the South could have a Negro speak at chapel once this year. It would be wise and realistic to have representatives from other races and nationalities on the chapel programs also.

d. The leaders of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can emphasize to the Scouts the need for courtesy between the races as a war-time measure, and gradually lead them to see that it is a peace-time measure also. Especially can Boy Scouts be trained to help ease crowded situations such as at games, fairs, parades, in buses, etc.

e. Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, Junior Chambers of Commerce could have Negro speakers at one or more of their meetings this year. Are we suggesting that the Negroes be asked to eat with the club members? Yes. We are. In 1942, it can be done. Make it an international luncheon, if that seems more tactful. Have a Chinese, a Brazilian, an East Indian, a Mexican, a Negro there. Not one Rotarian, by so doing, would lose his job, or his prestige, or his economic power, or his appetite. If, however, the eating still seems beyond the power of the white Rotarian to endure (how funny and stupid it must seem to people across the seas observing us!) then a Negro could be asked to speak at the *close* of the luncheon. . . . But there is one thing that we southerners must face: there is going to be no successful world order, no democratic international organization that will endure, no peace

that will last, until men of all colors and nationalities are *willing to sit down and break bread together*. The breaking of bread is the one symbol of brotherhood which every human being from end to end of the earth understands. The Lord's Supper is such a symbolic act of brotherhood in Christ. How any one can be so blasphemous as to dare partake of the Lord's Supper, the Holy Communion, when he refuses to eat with his black brother is something that has troubled this southerner all of her life.

For the Few:

Now we have edged into the areas which call for courage and wisdom, self-control, skill, vision. Hitherto we have tried to avoid the heroic and the dramatic. After all, there are so many simple things to do, gracious, small democratic acts, that would soften humiliations, increase harmony, begin to bring about a new way of living. . . .

But, by the few who always lead into new patterns of life, and up to new levels of civilized and democratic behavior, there are other acts that must be undertaken:

Sometimes a shock is essential to the physical or mental recovery of an individual. It is a therapy to be used only by the expert. Shock-therapy used on the South must be administered by those who know what they are doing, who have the skill and the 'technic,' and who have counted the costs. But expertness in using it is within the ability of many people, and when rightly used, it injures no one.

1. More and more white southerners, who have poise and self-control, must speak clearly and publicly against segregations of Negroes on buses, street cars, elevators, in concert halls, in dining cars, in school systems, in defense plants, and especially in the armed forces. More and more respectable white southerners must break the taboo of silence: in the pulpit, in public speeches, in newspaper columns, in magazines, in conversations. More and more must break the taboo of action: by eating with Negroes, by sitting by them in public places, by having them in their homes. This kind of speaking and acting must be done with dignity, with awareness of the whole situation, with full awareness of 'the costs.' More and more southerners must be willing to risk

losing a job thereby (after all, our soldiers have lost theirs); to take a few snubs from friends; to be criticized even by Negroes themselves. Their best protection is their tact, their dignity, their sense of humor, their quietness as they speak or move, and the 'bulletproof armor' of democracy itself.

2. More and more Christians must protest segregation in their churches. They must insist upon God's House being God's and not headquarters for white supremacy. This is a challenging situation which the church in the South can no longer evade. The world is asking why; the world will want to know.

3. Southern leaders must take an open stand for democratic labor unions, realizing that racial justice and strong labor unions are inseparable.

Such words and acts denying the democracy and Christianity of segregation are not easy. But they must be said and done. Yet those who speak out bravely must do the little things also; must rub on the salve; must never forget the amenities. They will not feel like martyrs and certainly, under no circumstances, will they be exhibitionists. This is simply a hard job for the brave and the wise, and a job that needs them now.

But even so, *can* segregation be changed in the South?

Isn't it a little absurd to ask if segregation customs can change—when they are changing before our very eyes? Despite sharp, bitter symptoms of reaction which seem to indicate the contrary, despite many whites' cowardly refusal to speak out their real feelings, underneath (in some cases, artificially forced) tension, customs are changing. Gene Talmadge knows they are changing and knows that nothing can stop the changing. He (in common with many prominent business men) hopes only to exploit the storm for all that can be got out of it—while it lasts.

The world situation, the pressures of war needs, the global hunger for human freedom, the changing economic patterns, have pushed the South into a new situation which cannot be dealt with in old traditional ways. Freedom is ringing its bell—in Harlem, in India, in Detroit, in Burma, in Java, in Atlanta, in Jackson, Mississippi . . . and it is making a music the whole world likes and is moving close up to. . . .

To talk therefore of the South's *unwillingness* to 'give up' segregation has a touch of irrelevance about it. It is *already* giving

it up. Only the ignorant or the very old, or the very frightened among us can think otherwise today—if they think at all. (The trouble is, that we have more reflexes than thoughts concerning the race situation. A reconditioning of reflexes must therefore be brought about.) *How to bring non-segregation quickly and harmoniously*, how to avoid violence during the *change*, how to prepare the southern public for the change that is already taking place is now the job we must work on.

For the adjustment of the healthy-minded: a thorough, efficient and rapid education (in schools, in workers' education classes, in unions, in People's colleges, on billboards, in libraries, in forums, by using skillful modern forms of propaganda as to the urgency of swift and non-violent change) will be all that is necessary. For the mentally ill (and those who talk excitedly about segregation are mentally ill) a kind of color-weaning may be necessary. In a building, one elevator "for whites only" can be reserved to take care of those who can not bear to ride up in the car with people of other skin shades. The green curtain in dining cars (whose present use embarrasses every decent white) can be an excellent shelter behind which the few psychotic whites who get excited when they look at folks of another color can eat in peace. A few sections in theaters can be reserved for those requiring color isolation. . . .

For those economic powers who have a stake in race tension, who have used their power so unscrupulously and so furtively, more than green curtains will have to be used; and far more than education. Labor union pressure, Constitutional amendment, new laws, and Presidential war decrees are the only way to cope with them. As much power must be used to control them as they now use to control the race situation—and that is a very great deal of power indeed.

It is now a matter of good and decent people having the *will*.

Yes, it is true: in times of peace and ease, customs change slowly. But in times of strain and stress customs change quickly. During the last war, American women won the vote. During this war, the Negro and the poor white can win the vote. During the last war and shortly after, social and sex customs changed rapidly and radically. Things were done that had never been done before: shocking, healthy-minded things often; shocking, foolish things, sometimes. During the depression, a mild economic revolution

took place. By Presidential decree banks were closed, reorganized, opened again; CCC camps, NYA camps, WPA projects, PWA and FSA projects, housing projects, security laws, tumbled one over the other in rapid succession upon the American people while Republican die-hards and Southern Congressmen sputtered and choked and cursed.

We are now in the midst of a total world war and a total economic-race revolution. Things are happening; things are going to continue to happen. We can sputter and break a blood vessel or we can roll up our sleeves and get to work to make them happen smoothly and harmoniously. The choice is ours only in *what we do about it*; not in the changes themselves. [Winter 1942-43]

✿ Putting Away Childish Things*

In 1943, men dreamed of brotherhood and filled the American calendar with days of rioting and bloodshed, with obscene talk of White Supremacy, with bus fights and death, with smear stories and rumors, with all the fury that destroys men's good feelings for each other and makes understanding so difficult.

But it is not of these acts of violence that we need to talk now. It is of ourselves. There is no one reading these words who took part last year in a race riot, who killed a Negro, who used the foul words of a demagogue. Men who kill, riot, use foul words in the name of race will kill, riot, use foul words in the name of anything that safely provides outlet for their hate and frustrations. They are our criminals, our delinquents, our psychopaths, our sick and miserable people. Whether they wear frock coats or overalls, the toga of leadership or the stripes of the chaingang, they are the casualties of a culture which promotes hate more assiduously than love, which makes it so hard for men to live in dignity with each other that in despair they sink to the level of animals, tearing to pieces the good and the bad, hardly knowing one from the other, as they search in great hunger for something they lost in their childhood, and which nothing in their culture gave back to them.

Theirs is another story. A story hard to listen to. A story beginning with a man's mother and father and his childhood, weaving itself in and out of a culture which pressed here, pulled there, until there was no way for the personality to fit itself together in one piece; no way to find human, creative goals to work toward; no way to feel at ease with itself.

They are the 'bad' people. And we? We are the people who dream the good dreams and let the 'bad' people turn them into nightmares. Horrified, yet with a feeling of strange helplessness,

* This article appeared in slightly different form as *Humans in Bondage*, in *Social Action*, Feb. 1944. [Original note.]

we watch their violence, wanting to do something, wanting to stop such things from happening, but blocked from action by paralyzing fear. Our minds fill with compulsive phrases, "You'll do more harm than good . . . You'll only stir up trouble . . . This isn't the right time . . . You can't change customs quickly; only education . . ." Or we gasp in relief, "Race prejudice is economic, only by abolishing poverty . . ."—in other words, "Let the unions do it." We turn away, feeling that there is nothing much that we personally can do about it, except perhaps observe Race Relations Day once a year in our churches (though that does not, of course, mean that we must give up our segregated churches!), or join an interracial committee (if it is a cautious one), or talk a little about giving "equal opportunity" and a little about housing. Doing the little things so that we can forget that we are not doing the big things.

All most of us want, deep within us, is to be assured that there will be no more race riots; no more lynchings; no more killings on buses; no more public exhibitions of race-hate obscenities; no more flares of violence calling attention to a way of life in which we all willingly participate and are willing to continue to participate, if only the Negroes will be more contented; if only the psychotic, the delinquent, the criminal, the sick will not use "race" as a way of expressing their frustrations, although we give them a green light to do so.

We, who call ourselves the 'good' people, the intelligent, even the wise, accept without protest the spiritual lynching of Negroes which goes on around us daily, in every town, every city, every part of our nation. We accept the quiet killing of self-esteem, the persistent smothering of hope and pride, the deep bruises given the egos of young Negro children; the never-ceasing humiliations which Jim Crow imposes upon human beings who are not white. We willingly say—almost all southerners and many northerners say—that segregation can not be abolished; whatever is done "for" the Negro must be done under the very system which lynches his spirit and mind every day he is under it.

For most of us are still thinking and feeling as white people. Most of us still want the priorities which we have under the White Supremacy system and we fear when segregation goes our priorities will go with it. Most of us are incapable—having calloused

our imaginations with the daily rubbing of one stereotype against another—of realizing what we are saying when we say calmly that these things must be changed very slowly, that the Negro must ‘prove’ himself and then he will be ‘accepted’ by the white man. We drop the heavy millstone of Jim Crow about the Negro’s neck and turn away from seeing what it does to the man beneath it. We are saying in effect: the system of White Supremacy means so much to us, the pattern we are living under has given us so many compensations, that we are willing for each little Negro child born into the world today to have the Jim Crow yoke placed around his shoulders, we are willing for black children to be humiliated, bruised, hurt daily, subjected to a psychic brutality that would arouse us to fury if our white children were subjected to it; that *has* aroused our fury when it has happened to Jewish children in Germany. We are willing for these things to go on and on because we can not bear to change our own feelings, because we can not endure the thought of facing the basic fact before us: the white man and his love for himself and his skin color.

Our trouble is, we cannot feel deeply these words we are saying. Our emotions are blunted concerning Negroes as human beings. It is as if we had segregated an area in our minds, marked it Colored, and refused our feelings entrance to it. And when we do begin to feel, as lately some of us have been feeling, when there springs up in us that deep, thrilling desire to tear off this steel frame of segregation that is warping both white and black lives, that is distorting everything fine and good which we prize and believe in, then suddenly we are pulled back, held by a chain that will let us go only so far and no farther. The old fear begins its old compulsive whisperings, *Yes, but this isn’t the right time to do it. You’ll only do harm, not good.* . .

As a white southerner, born in a Deep South town whose population was predominantly Negro, reared under the segregation pattern, still living today under it, I know the fears by heart. I know the placid taking for granted of a way of life so wounding, so hideous in its effect upon the spirit of both black and white. I know the dread of change; I know all the rationalizations by which the white man eases his guilt and conserves his superiority; how he concentrates—as if *he* were unchangeable, as if *he* and

his pattern can never be changed—not on his own problem of white superiority, *not* on his own sick obsession with skin color, but instead on the Negro, hoping that somehow the Negro can be changed to fit the pattern more harmoniously. That is what most of us mean when we talk of race relations: a more harmonious adjustment of the Negro to the white man's pattern. And we have sold the idea to the North also.

In times of harmony, of ease, this fear grows less, the chain loosens, and we become more amenable to the teachings of Christianity, of democracy, of science. Even in the Deep South, in times of ease, men grow more 'liberal' toward the Negro, feeling then that he may safely be 'given more privileges.' But as tension increases, the old fear increases with it, and action is paralyzed by old taboos against speaking of human relations in terms of human equality. All else may be discussed but segregation; all else but the basic question: *are Negroes human, or aren't they?* The taboo of silence restrains such discussion in a way that only the hardest, the most independent, dare defy it.

This is well demonstrated now in the South by many liberals who in their private lives do not practice the segregation they compulsively proclaim in public, who often eat with Negroes (unostentatiously), who, when away from the South—and often while in it—break many of the old segregation taboos, but who now insist publicly upon their belief that *for the South the pattern can never be changed*, and who punish, by ostracism and belittlement, other southerners who dare speak out plainly for a way of life that is Christian and good for southern people. And by this public insistence on segregation, they tighten the bonds of fear, they deepen prejudice, in all people; they strengthen the position of demagogues, who have never lacked courage to speak *their* piece on race; they make it easier for every man of good feelings to regress to less humane ways of behavior. They do this evil, they think, in the name of 'expediency.' They are not aware of the more profound reasons which compulsively make them act—not according to the demands of reality, but according to the demands of unconscious fears and guilt which they have no name for and which they can not come to grips with.

We need to understand these fears. And though we have little space here to go into it fully, perhaps a few suggestions might

give us insight into a problem which is one all white people, rich and poor, South and North, share in common.

We would all agree that around this subject of race have gathered the southern man's deepest fears: that only about God and sex do we feel so strongly. Religion . . . sex . . . race . . . strangely tied up together in our minds and hearts! All that we feel deeply about them we began to feel as small children. We learned about God, about sex, about race, before we began to speak words, we learned at the same time, we learned from the people who were dearest to us: our mothers and fathers and nurses.

We were trained to feel a certain way about God; a certain way about sex; a certain way about race. We were trained to feel, to act out these feelings. The words *race*, *sex*, were not often used by those who trained us, though we learned early to talk easily of God; but attitudes *toward* sex and race were more deeply engrained in our personalities, perhaps, than were our feelings for God. We were taught that we did not play with our bodies at the same time that we were taught that we did not play with Negroes. We learned early to feel that incest was wrong; we learned as early to feel that segregation was right. We learned these matters, as children always learn, by deep feeling. We felt profound guilt if we betrayed our learning, and we felt it as deeply about one as about the other.

As we grew older, went to school, read books, traveled, some of us acquired new and scientific facts about race and sex, some of us acquired more mature ideas about God; and sometimes we seemed to believe them . . . but deep within us, we continued to feel much as we felt when we were little children. We acquired the facade of an educated man living in an enlightened world. We use, even now, intelligent words and phrases, we behave under most normal conditions as educated, well informed people should behave. But deep within us, we feel much as we felt as little children. Any new feeling, any profoundly different feeling, would seem to our unconscious minds a betrayal of childhood love for our parents—for most of us have never learned to separate this love from the 'right' and the 'wrong' which our parents taught us. All are tied up together and to all we react with indiscriminate emotion. Much of this we never put into words, not

even in our minds do we think it. And yet a reminder of this fact may suggest the ease with which men regress under strain and pressure to earlier, less rational, less appropriate feelings.

There is not one of us who has not seen this regression happen to children. A child who long ago stopped sucking his thumb gets sick; begins thumb-sucking; regresses to an earlier, more secure, less strained period in his life and its habits. When we are put under racial strain, when confronted with the need to make new adjustments, we find it easier to become racial thumb-suckers, easier to give up our more 'liberal' and mature ideas; afraid now to do what the needs of reality demand, afraid (in the intense way children are afraid) to break the taboo of segregation. And our northern liberal friends find it easy to thumb-suck with us. They, too, are using the rationalizations we have so persuasively taught them—though with far less excuse for using them than have southerners, whose training in race was begun earlier in childhood and carried on more persistently.

Now we hear talk of one world, of one brotherhood of people. We know there will be no peace on earth as long as skin-color makes enemies of men and divides them one from another. We see the evils of segregation in our own country, the harm our pre-occupation with white superiority is doing; we fear the riots, the murders, the lynchings in our home towns; but we find it hard to change our obsessive thinking, our fear (stronger than the fear of race riots) of meeting old needs in new ways. We find it so easy, as conditions grow hard, to regress to our childhood racial feelings, even though they are grotesquely inappropriate to the demands of the present.

It is true that we have stereotyped the Negro but we also have stereotyped ourselves and our actions. We need to learn to think of the Negro as human; we need ourselves to *become human*.

There are of course, areas in which all of us are 'human,' in which even delinquents and criminals and the mentally ill function as humans. Although we begin life loving only ourselves, most of us do not stop there. There are few individuals who do not have some ability to identify their sympathies with other people, some willingness to place the needs of others, of at least one other, on an importance with their own. Only the schizophrenic has completely lost his ability to love and to make human

identifications. But when we reserve this humanity of ours, this precious quality of love, of tenderness, of imaginative identification, for people only of our skin color (or our family, our class), we have split our lives in a way shockingly akin to the way schizophrenics have split theirs; and we develop—as whites have developed toward Negroes—a personality picture strangely like theirs: of blunted emotions, delusions of persecution, feelings of ‘aloneness,’ extreme irritability when efforts are made to change our white ways; projections of our conflict upon the Negro himself, making him the ‘menace,’ the ‘problem’; and a desire to shut ourselves off by segregation not only from him, but from all science, all influences that are disturbing to the picture we have made of ourselves and our “persecutors.”

It is not a pleasant picture that I have drawn of the white race. There is not one of us who can take pleasure in thinking of ourselves in a way so disturbing to complacent self regard. Yet, if we do not resist it too much, if the aroma of psychoanalytic words does not offend us too deeply, perhaps we can begin to gain insight into the damage race prejudice has done to our personalities and culture. We need to assess this damage, for it is more than poor wages, wasted soil, poverty, race riots; it is more than the damage done to Negroes themselves; it comes close home to each one of us white people.

There is a problem facing all of us, black and white, but it is not the Negro Problem. It is the problem, for Negroes, of finding some way to live a good life with white people. It is for each white the problem of learning to live a good life with himself.

[Spring-Summer 1944]

NOTES

1. The significance of the title Lillian Smith chose for her column may escape anyone who cannot recall that Coca-Cola, the indigenous Southern potion, was popularly called “dope” and, being overly sweet for some tastes, was often cut with lime juice.

2. This material was excerpted by Lillian Smith from an early draft of her novel *Strange Fruit*.

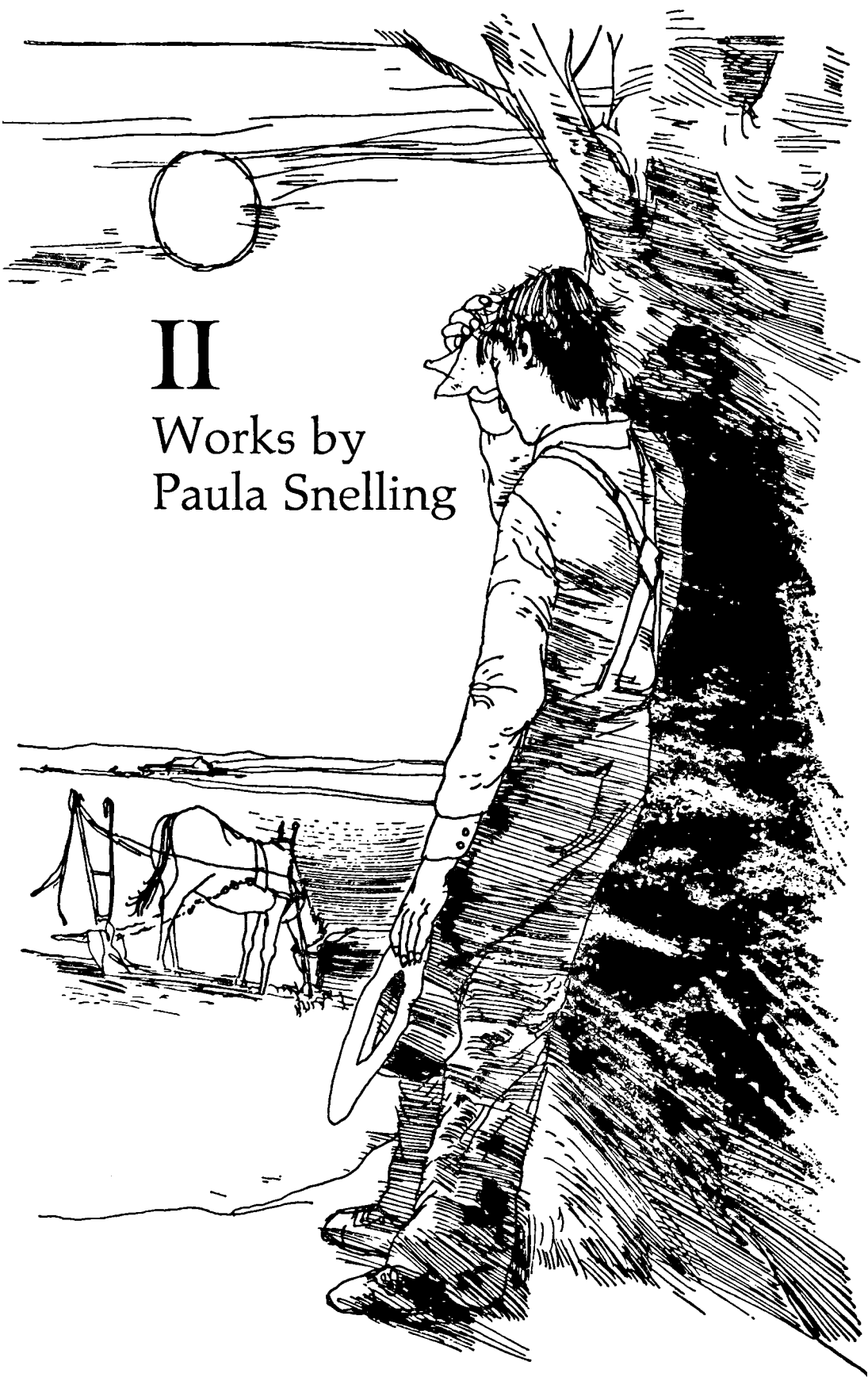
3. Lillian Smith wrote a novel about China prior to writing *Strange Fruit*; she took these sketches from the Chinese novel, the manuscript of which was destroyed when her house burned in 1955.

4. This play was developed and performed at the Laurel Falls Camp in the summer of 1939.

5. In these vignettes Lillian Smith recorded some of the experiences which she and Paula Snelling had while exploring the South on Rosenwald Foundation travel grants in 1939-41.

II

Works by
Paula Snelling



Billings 1968

✿ Thomas Wolfe: The Story of a Marvel

When a new star bursts upon our world, astronomical or literary, our attention is most easily and quickly riveted upon its size, speed, nearness, brilliance. Only later do we pass on to a consideration of the elements of which it is composed and of its relationship to the rest of the universe. Then opinions are put forth tentatively and even more time must elapse before there is much permanent unanimity of judgment. During the last few years these phenomenal aspects of Thomas Wolfe's greatness have dazzled our eyes. Only now can interest shift to an analysis of his talents and what they are likely to mean to us.

Without doubt Thomas Wolfe is distinguished not only among his contemporaries but among the writers of all time in quantitative matters. I suspect that his sense receptors are unusually keen and that his glands function with exceptional vigor. There is a hint in one of his earlier articles* that his above average size lowers the threshold of his consciousness to things measurable. He has an insatiable appetite for sensory experiences, an almost pathological preoccupation with numbers; a compulsion not only to read a stupendous number of books and to write an unprecedented number of words but to gloat over the mere mass of these things. He sticks not one but ten fingers into life's pie, and pulls out not one but ten, twenty . . . forty . . . plums. He is charmed with the purple color of these plums . . . he would like to taste one but how can he pause to taste *one* when there are forty . . . eighty . . . ?

Those who desire to increase his reputation have made much of this mass mania. I do not know whether they have themselves been swept off their feet by the tide of his quantitative excesses,

* *Gulliver*, reprinted in *From Death to Morning*, Scribners. [Original note.]

or have merely recognized and played upon the ease with which the corollary of his fame could be made to follow, in a country and a generation as marathon-minded as ours, upon America's most popular axiom: "A hundred thousand—anything—can't be wrong." True, Wolfe confessed in his *The Story of a Novel*** to quite a bit of difficulty and despair before getting his first book ready for publication. So success was not too easy. But even here he seems much more engrossed with the depth and darkness and numerical frequency of his despondency than with the despondency itself.

Despite the fact that quality and quantity are so seldom seen together that the discriminating are at times tempted to take the presence of one as *prima facie* evidence of the absence of the other, Wolfe possesses both. For style, I take it, is a qualitative thing. And Wolfe has a style which is individual, distinctive, arresting, powerful. So impressive a style that one can hardly quarrel with Carl Van Doren for putting him among the immortals in his recent *Anthology of World Prose*. But a careful analysis of this style leaves one with the impression that it is dependent upon his appetite for numbers. Certainly he has transmitted a multiplicity of sense impressions into phrases which in their cumulative effect resound musically and potently upon the reader. One is constantly amazed at his ability to pile adjective upon adjective until his tower of Babel reaches to the skies without incurring the curse of a confusion of tongues. But when one tries to disentangle his style from his compulsion to rush from one sensation to another with a pause only long enough to photograph its outer surface and count it, there emerges little that is unique and commanding. He seems never to have been engulfed by any one emotion long enough to plumb the depths of it, never to have been aware enough of the tragedy of any one individual or one situation to have his soul torn by it.

The great artist customarily has been made by first having his heart tortured and his mind stretched by observing or experiencing to its depths one and then another of life's tragedies until finally he arrives at a comprehension of mankind's universal suffering and weakness and nobility. He then reveals this to us

** The Saturday Review of Literature, December, 1935. [Original note.]

in some new specific imaginative tale which is more pregnant than any one thing he has directly encountered because it preserves the essence of them all. Wolfe has short-circuited this specific-general-imaginative gamut with an amazing but not all-satisfying success. He sees the surface of innumerable situations simultaneously and reveals one of them directly with the two-dimensional accuracy of a camera and the zest of eager powerful young manhood, but this same eager youth impels him to rush on to the next glittering surface without realizing much more than the numerical significance of the last one.

When I had read about half of his first book* I found myself saying "What a writer this man will be if the gods ever choose to grind him through those mills from which alone emerge the exceeding fine sensitiveness of the great artist and the emotional maturity which most of us are never buffeted into." But, now at the end of two more books,** I am doubtful that he is grist for these mills. It might be as disastrous to run him through them as to run Peter Pan through them. For I suspect that Thomas Wolfe's style is a by-product of his naive vigor and that he himself is the spirit of vital potent young manhood personified—magnified—almost deified. That and nothing more. And that perhaps is as much as we should look for in any one individual. No one has ever wanted Peter Pan to grow beyond the realm of childhood; and no one, perhaps, should want Thomas Wolfe to mature beyond the realm of young manhood. There are few spectacles to which mankind can respond with such ubiquitous and spontaneous appreciation as that of zestful questing youth. And there is little likelihood that Thomas Wolfe will be frequently rivaled in the capacity to entrap that spirit on the written page.

But in the middle of *The Story of a Novel*, Wolfe himself seems to have begun wondering if he has been whoring after false gods. It appears that he has been taking stock and catching glimpses of other levels than those in which he has gloried and achieved. If he comes to doubt seriously the supreme value of his world of sensations he must lose some of his unconscious assurance, some of his teeming vitality, some of his potency, and with that his

* *Look Homeward, Angel*, Scribners. [Original note.]

** *Of Time and the River*, and *From Death to Morning*, Scribners. [Original note.]

"style." And there is no indication as yet[†] that he has any other supreme qualifications for comprehending and revealing the world of the mature artist. We can only wait and see. [Spring 1936]

† In *From Death to Morning* the appeal of his stories is in inverse ratio to their deviation from the manner of his novels. The strongest and most intriguing thing in it is *The Web of Earth*, which produces an effect scarcely distinguishable from that of any hundred pages selected at random from either novel. [Original note.]

✻ [A Review]

THE WEB AND THE ROCK. By Thomas Wolfe. Harpers.
\$3.00.

America has had so few literary geniuses that the passing of one at the age of 38 would on the face of it seem a major catastrophe. Yet one wonders, on this first anniversary of Thomas Wolfe's death, if it was a greater tragedy than his survival would have been. For, though it is dangerous to put much credence in a prediction of an artist's future books made from the blueprints of his accomplished writings, there is strong reason to believe that Wolfe's brief decade of productivity coincided almost perfectly with the zenith arc of his potentialities. And that his fate, in a few years, might have become that of Jim Randolph (a minor character in *The Web and the Rock*, who could play superbly only one role in life, and that one by its nature predestined to be brief; yet whose ego could flourish only when the spotlights played upon it).

Thomas Wolfe said that *The Web and the Rock* "marks not only a turning away from the books I have written in the past, but a genuine spiritual and artistic change. It is the most objective novel that I have written." The reader cannot echo the pronouncement. For 270 pages George Webber struggles manfully, and with intermittent success, to attain an identity of his own. Thereafter he accepts the personality of Eugene Gant with only occasional misgivings. By page 405 all pretenses have ceased. (Which, of course, is not to pass judgment, or even to speculate, on whether or not the events which befell George Webber are identical with those Thomas Wolfe experienced; but merely to state that the reactions of Webber to them are consonant with those Wolfe—alias Gant—would have had under similar circumstances.) Here, as heretofore, one sees the universe as it appears to a marvelously talented young man who, at least at the unconscious level of his being, has never assumed other than that he is the center of it. Its gyrations are important only as they produce reactions in him.

Which is all right. For this is a stage through which we all go, and it is good, both as we pass through it and as we look back upon it, to have it pictured thus splendidly and in more vivid colors and on a more gigantic canvas than it is granted the ordinary mortal to live it. But it is a stage at which one cannot with impunity remain overlong. Yet even the love affair in *The Web and the Rock* (the first Wolfe has given us) and the emotional maelstroms and the disintegration which it precipitates, are important in the author's and in the hero's eyes only as they intensify George's feelings. That is, even here the universe remains a circle revolving about the original ego, and does not shift into the more mature orbit of an ellipse whose curve is determined by two foci. And the book perhaps symbolizes, in the career of the author, what the love affair overtly precipitates in the life of the protagonist: the peril which overtakes a human being whose libido becomes too strongly rooted in any one stage of the individual's development.

But what Wolfe has done (and he has incarnated in the written word, with a completeness and a satisfyingness seldom duplicated in literature, the spirit and the flesh of eager, questing, potent young manhood) he has done so well that it is deservedly a classic. Everybody in America who reads should enjoy the spectacle of one of Wolfe's books. But since the others which have yet appeared are in their better parts and in their essence replicas of the first, there is little need to read them all.

There remains one book by Wolfe yet to be published. Should it reveal mature talents of a scale comparable to the youthful ones heretofore displayed by the artist, then Wolfe's death would have to be written down as an incalculable loss to American letters. But pending the appearance of this last book (to be called *You Can't Go Home Again*) one speculates that Providence would have been no less unkind to him or to his readers had it permitted Wolfe his remaining three decades. For it would not have been meet, either artistically or practically, for him to have continued indefinitely in the sector where he had already accomplished so brilliantly; yet, so far, the degree to which he has deviated from the initial realm of his success has been marked by greater loss than gain. The simple facts seem to be that, though Wolfe's talents were in excess of the requirements for any artist, his ma-

turity of outlook and of comprehension had not kept pace with his chronological years; and that he was not equipped with that emotional stamina requisite for surviving and assimilating, had he been subjected to them, the unremitting buffetings by which life acquaints our Dostoievskys with her broader and deeper truths. [Fall 1939]

✿ Ground Itch, Art and Erskine Caldwell

Erskine Caldwell, obtaining ingress thru the aid of his Jeeter-worms which subsist on the excreta of our civilization, has found his way under the skin of the South and we exhibit all the symptoms displayed by one suffering from uncinariasis. We are almost mad from the immediate itch of it; we are largely unconscious of the anemia engendered by the chronic effects of it; we apparently shall wait years before seriously studying and seeking remedies for the unsanitary economic and sociological conditions from which it springs. And the thought of art at all in connection with the matter is as far removed from the minds of most of us as is a consideration of the symmetry of the design engraved on his foot by the hook-worm, to a bona fide sufferer of ground itch in its acute stages.

In the north, too, geography seems not the least of the forces shaping critical opinion. There, a picture of life on a sub-human level at any spot in the South is assumed all too generally to guarantee similar conditions in every nook and crevice below the Mason and Dixon line; and serves as a perfect screen for their own slums, gangsters, subway passengers, etc. To many of them, Caldwell's ability to titillate jaded nerves and to bolster up complacency constitutes genius enough.

Before attempting another estimate of him let me list a few assumptions. They may not all prove verifiable, but they seem both logical and likely: That Caldwell, having chosen the career of writer, wisely selected as subject-matter that section of humanity which he knows best. That he recognizes, rebels at and wishes to remedy the barrenness of their lives. That he is enough the journalist to know the avidity with which the public devours accounts of depravity (and quite possibly to draw up a definitive list of the existent or remotely conceivable acts and words of imbecility to which a starved and degenerate specimen of man-

kind could sink). That he is enough the business man to want the fame and fortune which often follow being widely discussed, and to assume that this publicity will aid his cause.

It remains to consider how much the artist he has revealed himself to be in his published works. For long pages he is only a shrewd and glib barker luring a gaping public to exchange its pennies for a glimpse of civilization's freaks; a Ripley concentrating on one section of society for the source of his incredible tales.* Then occur sections in which one is reminded of Lewis and of Lardner; but Caldwell has not that hatred of the stupidity of his characters which is the driving force lifting much of their writings above mediocrity. Comparisons with Faulkner inevitably arise; but Caldwell does not have Faulkner's power to evoke in the reader a mood of terror at the concept that a human being can exist at a level so far removed from that of his own daily experiences. (Tho I suspect that Faulkner's style would be shorn of much of its strength if some Delilah cut his subject-matter from him.) At times one thinks of Gogol; but Caldwell lacks that understanding pity of mankind as a whole and of his own characters in particular which raises the plane of Gogol's humor. Mary Webb's *Precious Bane* flashes in one's mind because it deals, without drawing back from their most degraded acts, with people leading almost equally circumscribed lives; and immediately out again, because the personalities and talents of these two are diametrically opposed, and also because Caldwell fears sentimentality too much to aim at that rare artistic triumph which skirts it by a hair's breadth.

These comparisons are not meant to imply that Caldwell should follow in the footsteps of these or of any other writers in order to merit praise, but to focus attention upon the diverse ways in which certain artists have transcended their somewhat similar material, and to clear the way for evaluating whatever talents Caldwell himself may possess.

* I do not mean that such things do not occur. I have myself seen or had reliable first hand information of happenings which match any one (tho certainly not all) of his tales. But the range of atrocities and inanities which human beings commit is such that each individual gives credence only with difficulty to any save those to which he has been inured since infancy. [Original Note.]

And he has several. The one which he demonstrates most consistently in all his books is that very rare and valuable ability to bring his characters to life. This is the more remarkable since the world they inhabit and the acts they perform frequently remain as unreal to the average reader, despite the vividness of their portrayal, as if they were the creations of some back-alley Alice stumbling through a wretchedly convoluted looking-glass.

A few of his stories—*Kneel to the Rising Sun* and *Saturday Afternoon* perhaps more than any others—are told with deadly effectualness. They grip the reader and convince him that at least here Caldwell is both sincere and powerful. They possess the kind of realism which makes fidelity to fact of little concern. The conviction that some human beings carry in them potentialities for just such cruelty, cowardice and unconcern for the sufferings of others is unavoidable.

Also, if he were judged solely by the effects on this reader of *Tobacco Road*, Caldwell could be accredited with an enviable talent for farce. Here he seems the master of sequence, of timing, of repetition, so that events which taken alone have little that one's intellect recognizes as in any sense amusing take on in their cumulative effect an overpowering funniness. He seems to rival Joe Cook in the art of bombarding the human mind with sensation after similar sensation till the particular set of nerves can no longer respond normally; so that the reaction suddenly ceases to be one of disdain or bewilderment or concern or evaluation and floods over into the hysteria of relief that at least temporarily those considerations are no longer valid. By the time Jeeter drags the ladder to the window it has quit mattering whether mankind does so-and-so or not. One is temporarily certain that at least he does not do them in exactly these proportions and that it would merely be uproariously funny if he did. This same capacity to sweep the reader from page to page appears at the beginning of *God's Little Acre*. But the lightness of touch does not last many pages here. Caldwell goes on into a rather heavy-handed depiction of one (in-law) incest after another until the reader who is not impelled by lasciviousness or by a curiosity as to whether the author has availed himself of every permutation and combination possible in a family of just so many members and so many in-laws, soon finds his interest lagging. Then Caldwell seems

to shift purposes again, and blends philosophy and mysticism into a cumbersome vagueness.

We Are the Living shows promise and occasional attainment along other lines, but not lines which he has yet chosen to follow far.

Some American People and most of *Kneel to the Rising Sun* reach only the level of mediocre journalism and propaganda. His attempt to help the cause of the underdog (and not merely in the South) dwindles to the ineffectual method of recounting in uninspired style the scant and warped scale of their activities. After reading them and his "In Defense of Tobacco Road"* one looks again at the book *Tobacco Road* and fears that the qualities which made it irresistible were not those of an artist who had found his medium in the realm of farce, but were perhaps instead an accidental off-shoot of his trying to get into 241 pages everything on that list.

Caldwell so far has got into his books just about as good a picture of the South as the old fashioned returned missionary gave us of China. It may be that the Chinese coolie does eat dogs, does dispose rather informally of superfluous infants, buys opium when on rare occasions he has something to buy it with, scratches lice, hates baths, burns a stick or two of incense to be on the safe side, dies of cholera and dysentery; but the occidental mind has not comprehended the Oriental mind when it has merely been told, however graphically, of these occurrences. Nor are our own insanities, nervous breakdowns, chain gangs, bread lines, chiselers, deaths by apoplexy, diabetes or suicide the less prevalent because our eyes have glimpsed new horrors bred by a race habituated to breaking a different set of nature's laws from those we westerners are accustomed to violating.

This is not to decry such efforts. They may be necessary in order to focus attention on the sore spot, before the greater task of comprehending can take place. One who has followed with Whitehead** the slow and tortuous pace at which mankind attains to concepts and widespread movements toward the mitigation of the evils into which it stumbles, welcomes any step in that ac-

* Drama section, Sunday New York Times. Spring 1936. [Original note.]

** *Adventures of Ideas*, by Alfred North Whitehead. Macmillan Co. [Original note.]

complishment. But the person who merely takes that step is a propagandist, not an artist.

As an artist Caldwell has yet to demonstrate more than occasional flashes of insight, graphic powers of characterization and the knack of assembling an amazing array of such acts as are at odds with the concept of human dignity. He has made some headway in a specific field which challenges the powers of an artist who knows more deeply than he yet does the subtleties and implications underlying these acts. It may be possible that he could become that artist if he would give himself time between books; would return to a continuous first hand study of his people as he matures; would read and ponder over a few such books as *Kristin Lavrensdatter*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Magic Mountain*, *The Idiot*, *Jenny Gerhardt* (which do not incorporate all virtues but which do penetrate into the depths of one kind or another of human being); would seek to make distinctive a style which now is most frequently mediocre except in his conversations; and could be freed from the distracting effects of the intemperate receptions which his writings have met both in the north and in the south. [Summer 1936]

✻ Mr. Faulkner Adds a Cubit*

A parable recommends that tares be permitted to grow along with wheat until harvest lest an attempt to weed out the former result in uprooting the latter. Mr. Faulkner has adhered literally to the admonition. During the years he has developed a quality of wheat unsurpassed in many of its attributes. The tares have been cultivated almost as assiduously. When the critic in his temerity essays the role of reaper and would harvest first the tares to be burned then the wheat to be stored, he is confronted with a problem which Matthew 13:30 takes no cognizance of. For the two have become so entangled that a separation is well-nigh impossible.

No one can read William Faulkner's books without arriving at the conclusion that the man has truly remarkable powers. Nor can one read these books without recognizing that the stigmata of the third-rate recur in them with a frequency which cannot be dismissed. The writer demonstrates again and again an intuitive awareness of the hidden maelstrom of the unconscious, a mature knowledge of the sufferings an individual must endure when impulses are in too severe conflict with the demands of his civilization, a fierce hatred for the unnecessary suffering which man puts upon man, a deep pity for the victim of uncontrollable forces. And when he is writing of these things there is in his cadenced prose a surging power which few have achieved. These are qualifications of the very first order. But seldom can the reader turn a dozen pages without being confronted with some gratuitous horror; some spectacle which might have been lifted with no extenuations from the most shameless thriller. Or he encounters an appeal to race fears and prejudices having about the connection with the essential story that dinosaurs have with the superiority of a particular kind of motor oil. Or he is led to

* *Absalom, Absalom!* by William Faulkner, Random House. \$2.50. [Original note.]

the brink of what seems a significant revelation only to have the scene shifted to a different time and place—often for the praiseworthy purpose of revealing a new facet which will make the delayed comprehension more complete; almost as often in what seems the spirit of moron Luster jerking the spoon from imbecile Benjy's opening mouth.

Several hypotheses, none wholly tenable, present themselves by which to account for the existence of such seeming incongruities in a mature and gifted artist. Perhaps he originally had (or early acquired) a "positive tropism" for all manifestations of the gruesome, as did Poe, and as he developed had the discrimination to bring his mature powers to bear primarily on those of deepest present significance; but has not rid himself of the vestigial inclination to display whatever hodgepodge of horror he can incidentally collect. Or, granted this fascination with the shocking, it may be that the emotional drive which carries much of his writing to so high a level, and which by its very potency testifies that it taps the writer's unconscious, short-circuits when its goal is too distant and requires frequent small stimuli to keep the current flowing. Or, again, it may be that he thinks as sordidly of mankind as the preface to *Sanctuary* indicates and believes that a reading public cannot be found for his books save through the lure of more and worse monstrosities; and is willing to barter his integrity. To shift the suppositions to a more philosophic level, it is possible that man is such that he cannot look directly at Truth. That when Jehovah would dole out a minimal decalog he can present it to even the great prophet only through the veil of a thick cloud and to the ludicrous and sorry fanfare of thunder and lightning, smoke and fire. Small wonder the prophet returns with not only a graven stone and a shining face, but with reverberations of thunder and after-images of lightning by which to bemuse himself and his people.

Mr. Faulkner's newest book reaches a higher level than do even *Light in August* and *Sound and the Fury*, in which the merely sensational and titillating had yielded the center of the stage to comprehension and portrayal. Though the primary object of his attention here as always is cruelty and decadence, he recognizes and throws more light upon the existence of these qualities in others than freaks. Yet here too he negates much of the major

significance of his writings (that the 'perversions' at which we shudder in the 'abnormal' have their roots and often their more dire manifestations in the drab and circumspect 'normal') by investing with a spurious and sinister halo of unusualness the very characters whom he otherwise draws so truly and understandingly. The tall tale element of which he so entertainingly showed himself the master in *Spotted Horses* and in the Indian stories of *These 13*, and which played a large part in *As I Lay Dying*, scarcely enters here. In his twelve books Yoknapatawpha County and the town of Jefferson, Mississippi, have become so thickly peopled with real and interesting characters whose lives overlap that the map and the genealogy appended to *Absalom, Absalom!* are useful as well as interesting. This last book centers around a man, Sutpen, whose silence concerning his past (and his present and future) and whose single-minded and at times ruthless pursuit of his uncommunicated ambition shroud him in unholy mystery in the eyes of the Jefferson people of the early and middle nineteenth century; so that now, in 1909, when most of the victims of the drama and destruction which came to those closely associated with Sutpen have died and the survivors are not willing or not able to unravel all the threads of mystery, the attempt to reconstruct the story resolves itself frequently into the speculations of first one and then another. The section in which Rosa Coldfield relives her part (tenuous, yet the core of her life and sufficient to make of her a poet and philosopher) is perhaps the richest section of the book. It would be unfair to summarize baldly a story whose value is derived largely from the significance and overtones which accrue as the reader learns first one incomplete part, then another tantalizing fragment and gradually arrives, as he does in life, at as full a comprehension as is permitted him. But it touches on several matters which have, at intervals, troubled man's sleep: ambition, conflicts of personalities, murder, poverty, war, gossip, courage, miscegenation, hate, love, marriage without love, sympathy, slavery, incest, friendship, blood ties, family pride, torture, reputation, loyalty, inadequacy, hope, imbecility, wealth, betrayal, suspense, loneliness . . .; and is well worth anyone's reading. [Fall 1936]

✻ [A Review]

THE WILD PALMS. By William Faulkner. Random House.
\$2.50.

In *Light in August* and in *Absalom, Absalom* Mr. Faulkner seemed well on his way towards making of his vices the virtues they potentially are. About *Pylon* there was little good to be said. *The Wild Palms* lies somewhere between the two extremes. In it, the publishers say, he has "achieved a straightforward and smashing dramatic story in the best manner of his *Sanctuary* and *As I Lay Dying*." Their shelving is correct, and one quarrels only with the inclusion of the word "straightforward";—Mr. Faulkner's most cherished trick in trade here and elsewhere being to march his readers through partially unintelligible, powerfully charged pages until they find themselves almost deciding what it is the author wishes to (or not to) tell them, then to jerk them into a new series of pages designed to the same end. For the rest of it, one looks again through the preface to the Modern Library edition of *Sanctuary*, glances through the subsequent corroborating pages, considers *The Wild Palms* and concludes that the author has not changed his spots. He even goes a step further here in that he tells two unrelated stories which have been placed in the same volume for little other discernible purpose than to afford him the pleasure, after engrossing you in one story to the point where you have forgotten what occurred in the other and have lost all interest in its characters, of transporting you to the other, there to remain until the same disinterest has arisen concerning the first set; then back again. Which bears more resemblance to the manner in which a fisherman disports himself with reel, rod and sucker than to the preoccupations of a serious and talented artist whose realm is the human soul. (The two stories, concerned with different characters, different locales, different times do of course permit the reader to make certain comparisons and contrasts, but the author does little in the choosing and the shaping of his stories to impress us with a relationship—unless it

be the basic inevitability underlying the beguiling opulence of phrase in the "take-it-off, knock-it-off, or have-the-crow-to-pick-it-off" alternatives life frequently restricts us to.)

And yet Faulkner has gifts which, were his core of the same caliber, would place him in the foreranks of twentieth century novelists. For that reason only does one not accept his performances with equanimity. Those to whom ten talents have been given cannot escape the hard requirement that they produce therewith another ten. Whereas Mr. Faulkner seems to have selected as his goal the search for a corrosive with which to overlay each of his ten rarely duplicated talents. Yet it is perhaps useless, even stupid, to rail out at Mr. Faulkner for this. His books, more than those of any other American writer, seem to draw their power and their poison from their author's unconscious. They seem to be fashioned almost as dreams are fashioned: just as certain of our dreams are charged with an emotion far in excess of the requirements of their ostensible subject-matter, yet not too great for the deep elemental forces for which the dream symbols unrecognizedly stand, so Faulkner's novels have a surcharge of power and terror which though fully warranted by certain under-currents and conflicts of life, yet remain definitely excessive for the matters he chooses to write about. Or perhaps he no more chooses what to write about than we choose what to dream about—the subject-matter in both cases being that compromise material which simultaneously affords outlet for pent-up unconscious emotions and screen against conscious recognition of the basis of those emotions. One feels even that Faulkner's mad search for ever more and more bizarre material may be an attempt to find something spectacular enough, something awe-ful enough, to justify to his conscious mind (compelled to rationalize where it fears to reason) the emotion which he has and which he recognizes is out of proportion to what he sees in more conventional subject-matter—he not having attained that rare maturity of vision which sees that the most turbulent, the most distressing, the most exquisite emotions a human being can feel are not the outcroppings of lurid adventures, but have their roots in simple experiences which are the common lot of man; and that the booger-men, the horror tales, the envisioned and the enacted perversions with which from time to time we confound ourselves are

but feeble and inaccurate projections of simple and terrifying and hidden thoughts, conflicts, experiences that basically disturb us.

We are grateful to Mr. Faulkner for his certainty, and for his repeated powerful affirmations of this certainty, that life is not the stereotyped, mediocrity-encrusted affair which the conventional mind in and out of books contents itself that it is. That his fiction should impatiently and angrily state and overstate the inadequacy of customary assumptions concerning what is important in life is understandable and valuable. But it is not sufficient. There is great potential virtue, both artistic and psychological, in Mr. Faulkner's tendency to isolate one compelling factor, instinct, drive, perversion, character trait, in a person's life, taking a bulldog grip on it, following the person where this compulsive motive power leads him, refusing to be diverted from the scent by the false trails human beings lay to bemuse themselves and their fellow-travelers. But Mr. Faulkner does not give continuous evidence that he discards conventionalities discriminately or for the honest purpose of learning what lies beneath. More frequently he seems to be flaunting in our faces the cheapness in which he holds us—and himself; or to be following compulsions of his own which only coincidentally take him into the rich, inadequately explored bottom lands of civilization. [Spring 1939]

✿ Sherwood Anderson... A Composite Picture

Sherwood Anderson suggests in a paragraph called "The Story Teller's Job" that his latest book* is a return to the spirit and aims of his earlier works before his sociological conscience set him on a track not to be trod beneficially by his kind. The publisher's blurb calls *Kit Brandon* a remarkable creation of character whose adventurous life reveals America as no other novel has ever done. Stanley Young, reviewing it in the *New York Times*, places it above the books which first brought Anderson fame because it gives a glimpse beyond the perplexities which heretofore completely shroud his characters, and above the interpretations of American life by his more acid contemporaries because it catches at the heart as well as at the head. Howard Mumford Jones in the *Saturday Review of Literature* says this book is as if written by three authors: the first portion by the amoral psychologist, the second part by the reformer, the third by the fiction writer who must now finish his tale; the heterogeneity springing not only from a profound disharmony in the author himself but also from a profound disharmony of artistic methods. Mark Van Doren in the *Nation* refers impatiently to Anderson's "greater and greater liking year in and year out for a way of writing that is more like the way a baby reaches for something than the way a man writes when he has something to say or maybe a story to tell."

So informed and profound a thinker as the late Vernon Louis Parrington a decade ago classified Anderson as one of the three or four most important men then writing fiction in America. Harlan Hatcher in his recent interesting *Creating the Modern American Novel* says that Anderson belongs with Dreiser and Lewis as the three most stimulating and influential authors in the creation of the modern American novel. Ernest Boyd in the preface to the Modern Library edition of *Winesburg, Ohio* said,

• *Kit Brandon*. By Sherwood Anderson. Scribners. \$2.50. [Original Note.]

"The stories are written out of the depths of imagination and intuition, out of a prolonged brooding over the fascinating spectacle of existence, but they combine that quality with a marvelous faculty of observation."

It is my opinion that the best of the old Anderson, as typified perhaps in *Winesburg, Ohio*, in such isolated short stories as *I'm a Fool* and in parts of certain novels, as *Poor White*, deserved the high praise of the authorities just cited; and that a great deal he has done in more recent years, including this latest novel, falls far short of that standard.

Some light may be thrown upon these variations by the penetrating comments Ludwig Lewisohn made in *Expression in America* concerning the distinction between the productive neurotic and the artist. Lewisohn does not here express himself unequivocally, but I take it that he classifies as a productive neurotic one whose writings spring from a deep inner conflict which has neither been successfully repressed nor solved either through sufficient conscious understanding or through the catharsis of a perhaps unconsciously complete artistic expression of the conflict.

I am not ready yet to venture an opinion as to what is the source from which the greatest and most catholic geniuses (Shakespeare being the supreme example; Cabell, twentieth century America's nearest approach) derive their comprehension of so vast a range of man's feelings and their power to recount it as if lived from the inside and viewed from without. Perhaps they are the ones whose exceptional brains and sympathies and imaginations have been free to observe and ponder over the manifestations of human nature surrounding them because their own inner lives have been without severe strain? Or perhaps they are instead the ones who have been subjected to innumerable emotional conflicts which they have had the strength to win out in or to transmute into art? But it does seem safe to say that a vast portion of excellent and moving literature has come from people who have no exceptional capacities for writing other than the having undergone some deep stress or blocking of emotional needs which has increased their sensitiveness to whatever phenomena may have been related to their suffering, and which brings vividness and

sympathy into such of their imaginative tales as come to serve as surrogates for that which they have experienced deeply.

This seems particularly pertinent to Sherwood Anderson. The unity of theme and the singleness of mood occurring in those parts of his writings which display rare understanding and sympathy and are expressed with most simplicity and cadence are inescapable: the frustration of young men whose vague gropings toward beauty (economic, cultural, sexual) meet with the poverty, ignorance, nastiness of "reality" as it appears under the Thou-shalt-not morals of the United States, specifically of the Midwest. Here he writes with a convincingness of detail and an emotion which bring conviction that, no matter what other aspects life about him may have had which he did not see, the experiences which he does recount—or their equivalents—are there to be struggled through by soul after baffled soul.

Anderson has often been called a psychological novelist of the Freudian school. This does not seem to be applicable in the expected sense of his being one who is a profound student of Freud's theories and who dramatises and gives life and individuality to their exemplifications in human beings; but in the less obvious sense of his being one who has independently suffered from some of the thwartings which Freud has observed others to suffer from, and who gives a blurred but emotional picture of how things appear to one on the inside and half aware of his predicament.

Since Anderson has transplanted himself and the setting of his books to the South he no longer seems to be writing about people or customs which he knows with ingrained knowledge, but to be writing what almost anyone who is alert for economic and cultural ills and has an indiscriminating sympathy for the under-dog might have done equally well. There is little here of the vividness and poetry which grow out of complete assimilation of the minute details of the characters' day-by-day life, and which permeate with art Fielding Burke's novels about people with a similar background (for, though Fielding Burke aims undeviatingly at sociological goals and keeps her knowledge of frailties, habits, aspirations of individuals subservient to them, this knowledge lifts large segments of her books out of the realm of the problem novel into unmistakable literature). And those meanderings

which characterize his style and which formerly had significance because of their emotional tone and because they lead in one circuitous way or another to what Lewisohn describes as the place beyond which Anderson's censor is unwilling for him to go, here appear to be merely sloppy writing.

In *Kit Brandon*, Mr. Anderson reveals of his heroine just what she, an extrovert with little knowledge of her inner processes, can verbalize afterwards of her journey from a ragged Tennessee mountain girl to a factory worker, a five-and-ten clerk, on to the affluence of daughter-in-law to a big shot of prohibition days, herself seeking excitement in rum-running; and what her interviewer can observe from a vantage point which reveals little other than her reckless skill at driving, her love of sleek powerful cars, her long slender feet, and the advantage to which her trim figure sets off her tasteful wardrobe.

There is a need that people come to understand more fully the processes by which the professional and, to all appearances, callous law-breaker is made. We know already that the evil lies partly in the inherent injustice of many of the laws and in the obtuseness with which they are administered, partly in the injuries which incipient personalities receive from a society blind to their needs and warped by its own injuries. But Mr. Anderson does not here graphically bridge the gap between cause and effect. And, as a portrait, the book is not much more individual and revelatory than a newspaper photograph of Pretty Boy Floyd. [Winter 1937]

✻ Signposts Along the Way

These three books,* each about Negroes, are of approximately equal value and interest, though they differ greatly in mood and in the kind of talent shown. Miss Zora Hurston has certain enviable gifts which few people now writing possess to such a degree. Her ability to transcribe intact the dialect and the colorful phrases of the Negro is seldom matched by writers of either race, and she has a flair for seeing the ridiculous and making the most of it in any situation. These talents would be invaluable as secondary attributes of a person who had a great deal to say and used them as aids in giving life and tempo to her story. But the author seems content again to write a book which scarcely rises above local color and tall tale.

Their Eyes Were Watching God is set in Eatonville, an incorporated Negro town in Florida. The characters are vivid and speak an idiom which entrances the reader. Miss Hurston uses scenes which should make envious the Octavus Roy Cohen school, though there is not in them the objectionable tacit implication of white superiority on which the Cohen stories rely for much of their appeal. But because of the end-man treatment which has so frequently been their portion in novels by whites, there are many members of Miss Hurston's race who feel that in consequence any Negro who writes of them in light vein is traitorous. But, so far as she goes, the author is to be commended. One would prefer that her wisdom equalled her talent. But, wisdom being a pearl of so great price that mortals customarily must sell all they have to attain it, the lustre of lesser jewels frequently must be enjoyed, if at all, out of constellation with it.

Lyle Saxon's book, by focusing on a geographically and nu-

* *Their Eyes were Watching God*. By Zora N. Hurston. Lippincott. \$2.00.
Children of Strangers. By Lyle Saxon. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.50.
These Low Grounds. By Waters Edward Turpin. Harpers. \$2.50. [Original Note.]

merically limited group, gives an effect of remoteness from life, of being seen through the wrong end of the telescope, which is not fundamentally true of the book. For Famie is a very real person and her problems are rare only in their superficial aspects. Mr. Saxon writes well through most of the book, though there are pages and scenes which are definitely mediocre. *Children of Strangers* is concerned primarily with Famie, one of Louisiana's 'free mulatto' group which rebuffs blacks and is condescended to by whites and consequently preserves its culture and charm at the price of an ingrown and narrowed existence. Famie breaks from the group first in one direction then in the other. The reader's interest remains in her, but the setting lends atmosphere to the book which is written with more than average insight and skill.

These Low Grounds is more broadly sociological in intent and Mr. Waters Turpin deals competently, fairly, interestingly with matters which are of primary concern to almost all Negroes; and which touch, however unnoticed, all whites among whom Negroes live. But this new author like T. S. Stribling—whose many admirable books containing truths which cry out for recognition seldom disclose a page of inspired writing—is in no sense an artist. Of the three novels under discussion, this has the theme of widest significance but is written in the most pedestrian style. The book is a family chronicle dealing with four generations of Negroes, and is set mainly on Maryland's Eastern Shore, with occasional excursions into other sections of the country. The stretch from the Civil War to the present permits the introduction of a variety of people and of situations. Those in the earlier days are dealt with rather summarily, the later ones in more detail. This book is another signpost along the way towards that epic inherent in the story of the Negro in America, but the epic awaits its author. The increasing annual output of such novels as these three, with their growing scope and competency, serves however to assemble an audience to receive it when it does appear. [Fall 1937]

✿ Evelyn Scott and Southern Background*

Nowhere in our generation perhaps has the reaction of a conservative people to its more intelligent, gifted and outspoken variants been so diagrammatically revealed as in the response accorded to Evelyn Scott, who rebelled first against the customs of a social group and later against the platform of a literary group. Her sin was to be born with an intelligence four-squared by honesty into a society rounded to the curves of convention and hypocrisy and compromise. That the place of her birth was Tennessee and its time the nineties is of significance only in that the circumference of the circle was a little less, its rigidity a little more than the norm. Though the specific nature of conventions, the depth of compromise, the degree of hypocrisy fluctuate with time and place, the individual who cannot genuflect to the mores of his world will always suffer and be the agent of the suffering of others; whether he elects to battle, to withdraw, to trim the corners of his soul, or to contort himself into circular shape and accept the perpetually attendant warping and friction: and the world will continue self-righteously along its way blind to the loss it inflicts upon itself.

Evelyn Scott's range of talent and power, of knowledge and interest is revealed in the amazing diversity of her work. Her most recent book, *Background in Tennessee*, is an informal and personal revaluation of the culture and the influences affecting her childhood. Threads of harmonizing philosophy are woven among strands of early recollections and of casual history, and give to the book a texture unusually pleasing. It is written with urbanity, and a tender unillusioned perspective. To classify the book as 'regional' gives that term a scope and connotation not ordinarily accorded it. For though there are territorial (and other)

* *Background in Tennessee*. By Evelyn Scott. McBride. \$2.75. [Original Note.]

limitations to the state of Tennessee, the mind by which the section is here seen is one which has viewed intelligently diverse corners of the globe. There is much in the book that will interest every southerner—and every self-termed cosmopolitan who has not excluded the South from his world. Its closing pages are an example of that kind of writing which is inordinately difficult—writing which appears to flow smoothly, informally, easily yet which reaches a depth and beauty customarily elusive in any framework.

The focal point of Evelyn Scott's earlier writings (and of her first rebellion) is family and sex relationships. In *Narcissus*, *The Narrow House*, *The Golden Door*, the reader is shown the volcanic substrata of homes in which the individuals (parents-children, husbands-wives, sisters-brothers, in-laws, lovers) make futile effort to strike a balance between the urges of their own denied inner needs and the demands of perhaps kindly intentioned but always stupid and torturing conventions. The books drew deserved attention and acclaim to their author at the time when the sophisticated were permitting themselves a fleeting glimpse into subjective mysteries, but they do not attain the stature of her later books.

This series of novels was interrupted by the publication of the autobiography *Escapade*. The book, whose plot was set by life and whose drama and background are more stirring and artistically fitting than individual designers of a tale can usually conceive, reveals its basic tragedy in a simple and lyrically beautiful prose which places it in a unique category. That *Escapade* was banned and dealt with salaciously by many of its readers makes one tremble at the subversiveness of spiritual valuations which can be effected by the pressure of a crude civilization upon mediocre and repressed souls. *Escapade* succeeds as few books ever have in taking the reader outside himself through the levitation of a mood rare in its intense singleness and purity. The book, which quickly sold 15,000 copies in 1923, is now out of print but it should be made available again to all those whose spirits have not been so conditioned to carbon monoxide as to be ill at ease with oxygen.

The novelettes in *Ideals* show skill along lines different from those evidenced in her other books (except, perhaps, in *The*

Golden Door which hesitates, in tone, between the earlier fiction and this). Though only 500 copies of *Ideals* were ever printed, it would perhaps have appealed to almost as wide an audience as Ring Lardner's stories do—not quite, for when Lardner realized that his pictures were losing their humor because of the damning exactness with which they revealed their living prototypes, he would poke the reader in the ribs to remind him that they were funny. But Mrs. Scott is not interested, here or elsewhere, in getting the reader through appeal to his physical reflexes. Though she deftly manipulates her material so that all the humor in it is subtly implied (whereas Lardner wrote more explicitly and dealt with more obvious incongruities), only in *Herbert Young*—and, intermittently, in *Mother Immaculate Heart*—do Mrs. Scott's own feelings seemed buoyed to that state of exuberance which is spontaneously contagious; only here is the timing just right to force the reader's mood; and only here is the portrait caricatured to the point which produces catharsis. Many of the subjects of the novelettes nature herself has caricatured in such overwhelming numbers that even the relatively detached reader (and the author?) can respond to them as comedy only when the nerves which report them as tragedy have intermittently ceased to function (as in the reversible-stairway optical illusion of psychology textbooks). But each of these novelettes presents with enviable exactitude the spectacle of one kind of human being or another writhing ignobly in a posture of nobility; an insect trapped, ludicrously,—when one can see it so—in a gossamer web spun from the threads of his own ideals. Sections of *Mother Immaculate Heart* (and hundreds of paragraphs and sentences scattered throughout Mrs. Scott's books) are magnificent passages of descriptive prose, and show a strong sensuous response to the physical world.

Migrations, *The Wave*, *A Calendar of Sin* together give an account of the nation (of the South, in particular) during the last half of the nineteenth century, in terms of the individuals who formed it and were formed by it—an account which has not been approached in magnitude of conception or in realistic treatment by any other American writer of fiction-with-historical-background. *Migrations*, the earliest and slightest of the three, differs from the ordinarily good novel in its failure to embellish

any of its characters with romanticism, and in its sympathetic awareness of the Negro's position in society. *The Wave* gives glimpses, each only a few pages long, of innumerable personalities caught in the crisis of the Civil War. The book is a technical triumph of compression, and attests the historical knowledge, psychological understanding, and imaginative powers of the author. I know of no novel, no matter how tragic or bloody or insane or futile war may be depicted in it, which rids war more completely of its glamour. But in ridding war and those who wage it of the glamour through which they are customarily seen the book itself has lost that vast reader-appeal which grows out of glamour. It is unfortunate, but it is true, that a book so designed as not to keep one turning pages for the 'story' or for sustained character interest does not arouse enthusiasm in the average reader—regardless of its recognized excellence and the esteem it evokes from the more thoughtful reader. The book was a Literary Guild selection in 1929. Mrs. Scott's other books, including the final *A Calendar of Sin* in this series, draw the reader more quickly into sustained currents of human drama. The *Calendar* is in many respects the most powerful of her creations. It is a mural of tremendous scope, covering in America the period from 1867–1908, presenting it in terms of the personal and sex meridians of a vast number of people whose lives converge in a Tennessee town. The individuals are set in an authentic background of historical events and sociological pressures. The interest inherent in the characters and the drama of the events befalling them suggest an infinite series of novels. (Mrs. Scott had originally planned five volumes, but under pressure of circumstances changed to the published two volumes and rewrote these entire 1400 pages in seven months time—a task the sheer mechanics of which constitutes an almost unbelievable feat; while the unfaltering intelligence and power with which the book is written would make it a remarkable achievement under the most favorable conditions.)

Eva Gay, Breathe Upon These Slain, Bread and a Sword are tied together by their concern with the artist and his creative problems. *Eva Gay*, which perhaps shares honors with *A Calendar of Sin* and *Escapade* as being Mrs. Scott's best books, puts its spotlight upon a woman and two men possessing talents, tem-

peraments and personal needs which society in its preoccupation with masses or with the aristocracy of money, does not take adequate specific account of—and which lead, in the love relationships of the three, to entanglements baffling solution. Eva, Hans, Evan in this book are the most individually apprehended and completely revealed of all Mrs. Scott's characters. No other American writer has attempted to take us as deeply, as simply and yet subtly into the human soul. The author's attitude towards her characters is more that of Somerset Maugham in *Of Human Bondage*. *Breathe Upon These Slain* is a slighter book than most of Mrs. Scott's, but it is in more complete emotional-intellectual harmony than many of them. It shows the artist in process of recreating, from their home and fragments of their possessions, a departed English family. *Bread and a Sword* while seldom surpassed by her in technical mastery and in brilliance of prose, permits the individuality of its characters to be subservient to the philosophical implications of their problems as beings potentially of value to themselves and to the world, yet not provided for in the present mechanized canaling of life. This series of novels together with Mrs. Scott's comments outside fiction in recent years are the expression of the second phase of her revolt: discontent with the present organized, myopic movement (perhaps merely a passing phase in a civilization whose glands are now in adolescent turmoil; but a phase, like war, piling immense wreckage, present and future) which submerges the individual in the group, deifies the average man, and takes the artist into less account than the moron for the cogent reason that the race begets artists less frequently than it does morons. Perhaps the most significant result, to date, of this revolt is the light it throws upon society itself. For the basic similarity of the two groups whose shibboleths Evelyn Scott has rejected stands out unmistakably, showing that it is inconsequential whether the verbalized code of people who band themselves together militantly be dubbed 'reactionary' or 'radical.' Each group goes to battle without quarter when it believes its economic and cultural supremacy or survival is endangered; or, more bloodthirstily, when the individuals comprising it sense that the gods their lives have been spent mutely propitiating are about to be exposed to their own eyes as impotent.

Mrs. Scott's first book of poems, *Precipitations*, was published

in 1920. While it is good it is perhaps not sufficiently different in quality or in content (save as the South American scenes and experiences affect it) from other poetry written in similar mood and form during those years to be singled out now. *The Winter Alone*, which appeared in 1930, attains high excellence throughout. A half dozen poems in it are rare for their compressed emotion chiseled by intellect into perfect form. They suggest that had the author chosen verse instead of fiction as her principal medium, she would have combined virtues similar to those separately demonstrated by Edna Millay and Elinor Wylie into the creation of a poetry of lyric-philosophic-descriptive blend which would be peculiarly satisfying.

The direction and nature of Evelyn Scott's achievements invite comparison with Dreiser. Each is deeply interested in the individual and in the fate meted him by the group. He sees the group itself as a mechanism, not amenable to change, by which a blind and unconcerned force is tragically thwarting and tramping down the individual; she sees the group as an aggregate of individuals, and feels that the malignancy of its effect upon its separate personalities is not a part of some vague fate, but results from a stupidity which may, with the tools of science and art, prove eradicable. Neither permits non-essentials to deflect him from primary interests. Dreiser walks over them or on them as they emerge in his path, without altering his tread or noting their presence; Mrs. Scott is aware with each passing step of the subtle implications both of what she includes and of what she omits.

Sinclair Lewis has interests sometimes similar to hers, but he leaves his work more dermic, through greater preoccupation with manners and habits. Sherwood Anderson has stumbled into a shorter, fainter (and more populous) path which at times parallels hers. He can tell us how it feels to walk to and fro on it, but he does not know where it goes or why. Edith Wharton, Ellen Glasgow, Julia Peterkin diversely demonstrate certain qualities which might have taken them where Evelyn Scott goes, but none of the three has detached herself sufficiently from the social and cultural group into which she was born to see either it or any other segment of life in long perspective.

No southern writer except James Branch Cabell attains Evelyn

Scott's stature as an artist; no one else impregnates his fiction with the skill, the erudition, the unfaltering vocabulary, the assimilated philosophy which these two people reveal. (The younger men—Faulkner, Wolfe, etc., despite the power of their prose, their emotional intensity, their many superb talents, are still groping, their goal not formulated in soul or mind.) But Mr. Cabell and Mrs. Scott diverge so fundamentally that contrast is more pertinent than comparison. Mr. Cabell is the final, the perfect, and, in the last analysis, the pitiable flowering of negativism; Mrs. Scott the courageous and gallant embodiment of affirmation, looking with clear eyes upon a world which is not cognizant of her valuations. Mr. Cabell says, in effect: There are no ends for mankind except as they evolve fortuitously through a necessitous fumbling with means. So let us beguile ourselves as pleasantly as is permitted with urbane manipulating of means. And Mrs. Scott: Ends are all-important. I will serve them directly and at any cost with the integrity, knowledge, skill at my command; but I will not utilize any morally or artistically incongruous means towards attaining these ends. I believe that art (informed and disciplined by science, inspired by benevolence) is the only acceptable instrument through which mankind can be persuaded to the gradual recognition and acceptance of spiritual truths. I will direct my talents, not towards mesmerizing men into accepting my conclusions, but towards assisting them to arrive at perhaps similar conclusions after viewing such facts as I—an artist, and hence a being upon whom experience registers itself with peculiar acuteness—have encountered, and which I present to them in artistic symbolism and recreation. But I will in no way prostitute my art—or my life—to the purpose of trapping by its secondary allurements those readers who are antagonistic or indifferent to my primary apperceptions. If the human race is not congeal permanently in this way-station of adolescence and blurred vision at which it has now arrived, two things are essential: concerted and intelligent effort must be directed towards acquiring and facing the implications of knowledge—subjective, abstract, spiritual, philosophic knowledge as well as objective, factual, physical, mechanistic; and encouragement, freedom to develop in their own way, attention, must be given to those individuals who deviate from the norm, since in their intuitions, apprehensions, discoveries, alone

lies prospect of change and hence possibility of progress for the race.

Mrs. Scott's defects as an artist functioning in the world, as it for better or for worse now is, appear to be half rooted in her philosophy; and hence are not to be quarreled with directly but rather to be stated and their immediate effects observed. There is only a single respect in which one questions the author's ultimate wisdom in writing as she does. And this is in her failure to recreate more frequently the surface mannerisms, the idiosyncrasies of speech, the illogical charm of personality which also are components of truth and which, however irrationally, quicken the human heart both to other beings and to characters in books. That the omission is not due to a fundamental incapacity of the author to appreciate and to reproduce these qualities is assured by sections scattered through her books which convey them perfectly. One recognizes of course that an artist must exercise rigid selectivity and that Mrs. Scott's books are focused elsewhere. But there is also the possibility that in eschewing self-pity and sentimentality she overdisciplines herself and thus rids her books unnecessarily of a portion of objective, everyday sensuousness and sentiment which would perhaps have been legitimate, and which would certainly have brought them a wider audience. And there is the final possibility that the part of Mrs. Scott which responds warmly to the absurd surface of the world does not always work in fusion with the part which is preoccupied with abstractions and with subjective data. But the fact remains that this seems the one way most nearly open to her by which her books, concerned as they primarily are with complex, subjective, non-flattering aspects of human beings and their relationships, could be made to overcome that initial reluctance to think and feel beyond certain levels which characterizes even the section of the reading public which quite possibly could appreciate her artistic achievements and comprehend the implications of her books. This lack of spontaneous reader-appeal is a potential handicap of nine-tenths of all books written for other than surface entertainment purposes, and is customarily overcome in one of various ways. Either the author speaks (as has been done since the days of David, Bathsheba and Nathan) in parables and by artful logic wins the reader to a sympathetic agreement before confronting

him with "Thou art the man" (whereas Mrs. Scott so utilizes her art as to convict us on page one of generic identity with the characters, and thus permits to function in the guise of reader-resistance that reluctance we human beings have towards seeing too clearly the less flattering underpinnings of personality); or the author weaves a web of romantic allurement around his characters and causes us to fall half in love with them as the creatures we, but for an accidental and scarcely noticeable lapse in the grace of God, would have been—with the effect that we can accept relatively deep draughts of life through their lips so long as they permit us to retain our most cherished illusion that mankind deserves, even if it does not possess, an anthropomorphic universe; or the book appeals (though this hardly applies to novels of the caliber under main discussion here) to those of people's needs which are not divorced from appetite—the comfort of mysticism (Lloyd Douglas, Charles Morgan), the glory of big-boy-hood (Ernest Hemingway, Hervey Allen), the lushness of hard-boiled sentimentality (Margaret Mitchell, John Steinbeck):—and thus, in one or another of these ways the author gets that attention which the reader otherwise would have refused him. Also, supplementing this or substituting for it when it is lacking, frequently critics (who at least theoretically serve as antennae of cultural progress) apprehend and vibrate to the peculiar qualities of a book, tell the public the value of its values, give assurance that there is in it ample recompense for whatever mental and emotional effort is required of the reader in meeting the author on his chosen ground. But critics are not unanimous in fulfilling their role. They frequently share those resistances which Cabell eulogizes: "... urgent need arises that human dullness retain us (as it does) securely blinded, lest we observe the wayside horrors of our journey and go mad. One moment of clear vision as to man's plight in the universe would be quite sufficient to set the most philosophic gibbering. . . ." Another mechanism by which an author may reach his audience is through the publisher's promotion department which, with acute but not unerring instinct concerning what we can be made to like, frequently oils a book in adjectives and thus slips it easily down the public throat.

None of these methods, the world and Evelyn Scott being as

they are, is likely to operate sufficiently to bring her as wide a recognition as she has earned—this despite the fact that she was immediately appreciated and has been read with increasing esteem and respect by discriminating readers throughout the seventeen years of her literary career. But if the Nobel prize committee should turn again to America, and if it does not repent its 1937 precedent of selecting a person for the quality and scope of his accomplishments without regard to the way he has been received by a coterie of critics or by certain sections of the public, there is nowhere in this country that the committee could look with greater likelihood of satisfaction than at the works of Evelyn Scott. [Winter 1937–38]

✿ Southern Fiction and Chronic Suicide

(The following notes, now incompletely developed, later will be expanded by the editors of the Review into chapters of a book on Southern Literature.) [Original Note.]

In *Man Against Himself*, Karl Menninger—that psychiatrist in America whose technical knowledge is best supplemented by literary, humanitarian and philosophical capacities—uses the term ‘chronic suicides’ for those individuals whose destructive tendencies, not beneficial manifestations yet restrained by conscience from obvious external violence, turn back upon their owner to undermine and cripple certain of his functions. He also suggests that there are circumstances under which these prolonged partial deaths are seized upon by a person as the only mechanism at the time open to him by which instant and complete death may be avoided. That is, an existence characterized by invalidism, impotence, warping of personality, delusions, may be selected, as the best compromise his lot permits, by an individual through the promptings either of his life instinct or of his death instinct; depending upon the pressures to which he is at the time exposed and upon the relative strength within him of these two urges.

It is interesting also to speculate concerning the degree to which chronic suicide may be practised by a cultural group which, borne down upon by powerful sociological and psychological forces, has regressed into decades of self-absorption. And, just as a psychiatrist sometimes gets his cue concerning the source of an individual’s malaise from a study of that person’s dreams, so one who ponders the delusions and malfunctionings of a group may find the crux of that civilization’s dilemma outlined or symbolized in the content (both manifest and latent) of the novels it has produced.

That southern fiction during the past century has not reached and sustained a satisfying level of artistic attainment does not in itself sufficiently differentiate the section from other groups, past or present, to warrant particular comment. But the consecutive reading of a hundred odd novels of the period causes to stand out in one's mind certain unique patterns through which this by no means unique failure reveals itself. The most obvious and the most obdurate pattern to solidify (and one often noted and commented on by others) from the reading of these quarter million pages of romance grows out of the extent to which the characters in our southern fiction have their role determined by the color of their skin. From mild wonderment at the concern and importance our writers so consistently attach to whether their packages of sawdust come wrapped in white or in black cellophane, one soon passes into the conviction that it is this very unwillingness to concede human dignity to their black characters which has circuitously brought about also in our authors the inability to make of their white characters more than a simulacrum of aristocracy.

As we have always known, for a character in our fiction to be white signifies (unless he is one of the tenant farmers more recently rubber-stamped into our midst) that he is to the manner born—an aristocrat to be revealed through the glow of romance, his virtues portrayed with the intent of evoking love and admiration, his vices merely to titillate and to be condoned; while to be black connotes that he shall serve as a support and a foil for the hero's glamour—to be treated, most likely, with tenderness but not with respect. But in neither case do we find deep probing of feeling, subtle concern with motives or even adequate realistic noting of surface incongruities. So that, though the characters are given sufficient flesh and blood to lure the senses of the reader and afford him pleasant escape, their vital organs and nervous systems most frequently have been excelsior, and seem destined to remain so, at least until our civilization ceases to put its premium upon the wrapper. And the reader, while held off from the depths which he would like to plumb in the characters between the covers of the book, is detoured into a consideration of the underlying mesh of cause and effect operating in the culture which produces and lauds these writers.

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During the period when the nation was acutely self-conscious over the institution of slavery (prior to the Civil War and during succeeding decades when its shadow was inescapable) certain stereotypes of the Negro arose by immaculate conception as logical necessities of the situation. There was no need for a genius to share in their procreation. The writers had only to make rag doll duplicates of concepts already cherished by the people. So firmly established in our ideology and in our fiction are these stereotypes that as yet no year passes without new books being published with the same old table of contents. And only in the past two decades have there been more than sporadic attempts to substitute new concepts. The familiar stereotype of the Negro as perpetual hewer of wood and drawer of water was among the first to emerge. This casual acceptance of the Negro as one designed to make easier our physical lot and to like doing so because his racial capacities attune him to just that is still with us, the best known sample in current fiction being found in *Gone With the Wind*, in which the author's never more than dermic comprehension of her white characters is parodied in her epidermic assumptions concerning the feelings and motivations of the slaves. A balder example is in *That Was a Time* by Grace Castlin, published in 1937 but—and this seems a hopeful omen—not widely reviewed or read. In this book there are no alleviating factors, such as the narrative interest and the beguiling animation of surfaces by which Miss Mitchell felled thousands on the Left and tens of thousands on the Right into unanimous casual acceptance of her corollary of a chasm dividing the races. Miss Castlin's book is a drug which appeals to one and only one appetite in the reader: the craving to identify himself with a group whose 'superiority' is assured by the menial adulation of another group.

This hunger for group elevation—to be attained not by the arduous method of tugging at one's own bootstraps, but by the simpler and more time-honored process of keeping one's boot-heel on the neck of potential rivals—also created for the Negro the end-man role which originated in the minstrel shows of the 1840's and now approaches its centennial with no signs of debilitation; Octavus Roy Cohen being the writer who most consistently turns flesh and blood into burnt cork and slap-stick.

On the surface, these stories are only a harmless and successful attempt to amuse—and since the soul of man stifles without that aeration of his bloodstream which laughter produces, no device for jiggling the funny bone should be decried quixotically. But when we seek the foundation of this humor, we find it based invariably upon titillation of white superiority. There is probably great truth in the theory that all laughter is a gasp of relief that one is not in quite so bad a fix as was threatened at the preceding moment; and hence that laughter customarily implies a feeling of superiority. Yet when this feeling is here revealed to be spuriously based on so arbitrary and insurmountable a demarcation as a detectable drop of African blood, the humor thins out.

The Negro as an ageless child is another stereotype which we continue to cherish. From the beginning there has been a tenderness, an artistry, a more definite though still limited realism involved in this treatment of him than customarily has been achieved by the vendors of the other type forms; and hence the poisoning has been the more insidious. Joel Chandler Harris won our hearts both by his implicit flattery and by his explicit art. More recently Julia Peterkin, Reuben Davis, Minnie Hite Moody have given us books artistically satisfying and to be quarreled with only in that, by confining their attention to the lower class Negro, they are seduced into tacit condescension. When the trappings by which the usual white hero of fiction is propped into the semblance of dignity are removed and nothing more basic is substituted for them, stress devolves upon picturesque qualities and the books fall into the local color genre—this despite the tenderness, talent and (qualified) realism of the authors. And when a writer condescends, in however kindly and obtrusive fashion, towards his characters he adds to the difficulties by which the needle's eye to greatness is passed through.

Roark Bradford comes first to one's mind as representative of the writers who merge these three stereotypes, add the tall-tale element, and dispense a product which combines the merits and demerits of the separate groups. The bulk of that fiction which the South has acclaimed as her own during the century has, sometimes tacitly, sometimes blatantly, sometimes ingratiatingly even to those who reject its major premise, supported the myth of white superiority either by evading the issue and those phases of

life which overlap it or by utilizing one or another of these type forms.

It seems to me that it is this continuously demonstrated unwillingness of southern writers to concede more than a subhuman status to their Negro characters which has been a decisive factor in causing our fiction during the century to hover near the zero mark. The mechanics of this poetic justice (in which the Negro, still denied the more elemental justice he sorely needs, may take such pleasure as he can) rests upon the fact that first class fiction is, with a few notable exceptions, grounded in realism; certainly it rarely springs from that brand of romanticism which bespeaks the author's inability or unwillingness to apprehend and assimilate the basic unpalatable truths of human nature. The soundness of literature elsewhere is equally dependent upon the degree to which the writers can face the realities of their people and of their characters. And each region of the world, in addition to sharing mankind's general apathy towards unflattering truth, has particular aversion to those aspects of it which conflict with local comfort. In sections other than the South, however, it is not necessarily incumbent upon a realistic writer that he concern himself with the psychic agitations growing out of racial relationships; these disturbances may or may not be elemental in the lives of his characters. But the black segments of southern life can no more be ignored than can the black squares on a checker board: they are as indubitably prevalent and integral to the pattern. To ignore them is to exemplify pathological blindness, and the individual or the civilization which retreats into psychosis from reality is required to pay usuriously for the sanctuary. As the psychiatrist attests, when there is in one's life a situation too harrowing or too humiliating to be recalled, one is under the logical necessity of blotting out a whole constellation of memories and sensations to insure that the dread event will not be catapulted into consciousness on the circuit of some synapse or of some syllogism. Even the moron cannot ignore just the isolate thing he would ignore, but must erase all which impinges on its borders. When the socio-philosopher is under compulsion to evade a central truth we are likely to get retrograde amnesia in the guise of Neo-Agrarianism. When the novelists of three successive generations focus their blind-spot on the core of the di-

lemma of their civilization it is small wonder that they and their readers are sunk in a slough of sentimentality into which the modulated voice of an Evelyn Scott or a DuBose Heyward can scarcely penetrate, and from which the ejaculations of our Caldwells and Faulkners may be powerless to extricate us.

But, regardless of the effect they have produced, people here and there during the century have written for some other purpose than to perpetuate the prevailing wish fantasy. Ever since Harriet Beecher Stowe's pen helped to loose the swords of the sixties there have been writers of varying skill and comprehension who aim primarily at depicting the unfavorable conditions under which the Negro is forced to live. A portion of them have, like Mrs. Stowe, served justice dubiously by employing the formula that right results from the adding of antipodal wrongs. And many of them, also like Mrs. Stowe, incidentally reissue one or another of the stereotypes, though they seek a different goal. Mattie Griffith, of Kentucky, a white woman who had freed her own slaves, wrote in 1857 *Autobiography of a Female Slave*; and was rewarded with ostracism. T. S. Stribling is undoubtedly doing the best and most comprehensive job from a purely sociological point of view. He brings to the task neither the refracting zeal of a propagandist nor the transcending fire of an artist, but the facts he presents speak eloquently for themselves. Theodore Strauss in his recent *Night at Hogwallow* has given a vivid account of the social and mob injustice meted the Negro, but he does not even attempt to create character. Robert Rylee in *Deep Dark River* and Wellborn Kelly in *Inchin' Along* have made outstanding single attempts at combining vivid characterization with realistic pictures of the struggle the Negro as a human being has in a society where the odds are cruelly against him. Lyle Saxon in *Children of Strangers*, Hamilton Basso in *Courthouse Square*, and other writers in recent years have dealt with the Negro with a fairness and skill above the ordinary. Sara Haardt's story *Little White Girl* and Lillian Smith's brief sketches of *Maxwell, Georgia*, intimate the lasting imprint made upon sensitive children by the color demarcations of the adult code. Emily Clark in *Stuffed Peacocks* does not differentiate unfairly between her Negro and her white characters, and gives exquisite sketches of each. But there runs through her work a trace of the dilettante which par-

tially invalidates it. Evelyn Scott in *Migrations* (and elsewhere) strips the deceptive epidermis from all her characters so that pigmentation is no longer of importance—save as she shows us that the lash has been applied more deeply into that flesh which was wrapped in black.

During the century the Negro writers have, in the main, followed in the tread of the white authors. This is of course in no way surprising. Environmental factors have been such that only a genius who also possessed a rare combination of secondary qualifications could have overcome the difficulties blocking his way towards perspective and preëminence in this field. The sincerest and most effective of their writing has come most frequently in their poetry and in their autobiography. Among the few who attempted fiction during the nineteenth century, Charles W. Chestnut broke furthest from the stereotypes presented by whites and came nearest to showing the Negro's thoughts and feelings. Since the World War, Negroes have participated in the trend towards realism in this respect. Few of them are able yet to equal in artistic achievement the best of the white writers who sincerely work toward the same end though they frequently excel in the use of dialect and in creating authentic atmosphere. The books of Claude McKay, Walter White, Jessie Fauset, Zora Neal Hurston rise, in one direction or another, above the average of reputable American fiction. Jean Toomer, in the best of his rare writings, reveals a style and a power which transcend race.

Rarely, there have emerged in the section writers with that quality of mind which is not easily lured by stereotypes either of race or of other matters. But the notes they have produced are not in harmony with the accompanying chords of the South: they are instead brilliant dissonances made by the friction of environment upon sensitive instruments tuned to a different key. And though friction is a force which neither physics nor psychology can dispense with altogether, its excessive use entails exorbitant deflection of energy—and, in humans, a warping or a pain which cannot be recompensed. These people cannot be called representative southern authors. They have lived their lives as exiles either in the South or from the South. Yet, either linearly or interlinearly, their birthright is stamped upon their work. Some of them have avoided writing of the Negro. But to live in the South and pro-

duce fiction of a high order which does not touch on color demands either a phenomenal artistic imagination or a phenomenal preoccupation with personal (as distinct from sociological) problems. James Branch Cabell once possessed the first and Thomas Wolfe is still possessed by the second. Cabell avoided the specific dilemmas of his culture, and the necessity of rolling up his sleeves to ameliorate them, by creating a new heaven and a new earth, in which Jurgen and God could toss abstract Justice back and forth between them without soiling their hands; and one feels that this is at the essence of Cabell: that he could not bear the spectacle of the world as he found it nor could he resist the gentleman's code which had been instilled into him with his first breath, and which rejects the basic substance from which man (and, by indirection, all his attainments) was created. Hence his negativism, the dichotomy of his artistic and his actual life; and hence the odor of Lichfield which seeps into Poictesme. Cabell lacked but one qualification for entering the kingdom of the world's supreme artists. All the commandments of literature (which, to master, a lifetime does not ordinarily suffice) he has known and kept from his youth up. But he had not the will to rid himself of his inheritance; he could take up only that part of mankind's cross which fits on the aristocrat's narrowed shoulder . . . And we look sorrowfully at him as he departs.

Wolfe avoids race in the same way he avoids every other matter which has not touched his personal life—and the fact that he comes from the mountain section suggests that he was not in inescapable contact with the issue.* The others have accepted their subject matter from the life around them, and have accorded the Negro as much dignity as adheres to any of us. Evelyn Scott has dealt with him sympathetically in those of her books which have the South for their setting, but she has been outside the section since maturity and has not written primarily of this problem. Among the writers who have kept the southern scene as the locale of their own physical and psychic lives and of their stories, probably Paul Green and DuBose Heyward have made the most sustained artistically satisfying creations of Negro char-

* A *Saturday Evening Post* story by Wolfe shows that the booger-man has spent a night or two under his bed, too. [Original Note.]

acter. They (and Eugene O'Neill) are able to deal with individuals white or black from the lowest strata of life with no trace of condescension and to convey to the reader their universally human qualities—and to do this in dramatically moving scenes.

But the most violent of the reactions from the grip of the stereotypes—and the ones to which the greatest amount of speculative interest attaches—have come from William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell and William March. It is as if all the emotional force stored up during a century in which the pendulum has been held, against the laws of nature suspended at the point of its furthest righthand swing, has suddenly in these three men burst its bonds and with accumulated momentum pushed them through the leftward arc. For (seeking the more adequate analogy) though the human race habitually exhibits a positive tropism towards self-deception, it has also evolved an intelligence which does not permit it to approach its goal with comfort. A good portion of the libido is therefore channeled off unhealthily to the task of keeping in approximate balance this essentially unstable equilibrium. And when a sufficient amount of psychic energy has thus been diverted, there follow neurotic manifestations characterized by unwonted power. Faulkner in all his writings but specifically in *Light in August* (and, to a lesser but still pertinent degree, Caldwell in *Kneel to the Rising Sun* and March in *Come in at the Door*) seems both the voice and the victim of this restless and tormented libido. It is as if his personal unconscious was early invaded by the too-long diverted psychic energy from the pervasive unconscious of the Southern White. So that both the potency and vividness (and sometimes the luridness) which is always there to spurt out when an individual taps his own unconscious is in his case saturated with the subverted libido of his people. And so that he is in effect both a symbol and a symptom of the ills of the South; and at the same time an intelligent and sensitive diagnostician of those ills (though one doubts that the diagnosis is in his mind specific and concrete) and an artist capable of shaping into beauty the material which impels him. His books are full of horror—too full, perhaps, but only in the sense that the truly existing though usually ignored horror is here revealed in distilled but not otherwise exaggerated form.

And the South is horrified by them. And is more concerned,

as she has been throughout the century whenever a fester appears or an x-ray is suggested, with repudiation than with etiology. Expatriation—brought about not so frequently by applying tar and feathers as by turning a cold shoulder—is the customary reward the section gives to one who speaks unorthodox truth as he sees it; and it is of little moment whether he sees it through the blurred vision of delirium or through the clear lenses of science. Either way, the right eye offends. And when it does, it is the instinctive and the Biblically bolstered tendency—which the South has adhered to with masochistic zeal—to pluck it out. But it is only when infection originates locally that there is wisdom in this course. When the poison stems from the vitals (of a body, a psyche, a culture) continued removal of the organs or limbs in which it symptomatically reveals itself is suicide of excessively painful and stupid form.

These statements do not imply that the South is inherently different from other sections of the country and of the world. Indictments equally damning though different in detail could be made elsewhere. But that a brother is victim of beri-beri is scarcely adequate cause that one should shun diagnosis and cure of his own paranoia. Human nature, with individual variations which are most frequently of imperceptible statistical or cultural import, is everywhere the same: and has no recourse from psychic disturbances save through the good fortune of circumstances which do not press too close, or through a wisdom which can come only by steadfastly applying one's soul to it. Unfortunately neither the search for knowledge nor its assimilation into understanding can be attained during periods of stress. Foresight, when it is applied, works with miraculous ease; but we humans, who customarily are impervious to all sapience which is not branded into us by direct experience, must win to salvation by the more tortuous tool of hindsight. And an undeflected gaze backwards shows us that the South a century or so ago drifted into an economic and cultural cul-de-sac; resorted to defense mechanisms; became fixated in them by the pressure of the Reconstruction era. It was perhaps impossible for the generation which first sought sanctuary in psychosis—and may have had no alternative but to do so—to then cure itself with no more expert knowledge nor kindly treatment than was to be had. It is different with us, in whom the state

is perpetuated more by tradition than by trauma. Where our people two and three generations ago were perhaps in part healthfully motivated, in their formulation of certain premises, by the urge for even a decimated and warped survival in preference to extinction under the pressure of forces which they could not so quickly comprehend and adjust to, we can hardly attribute our own acceptance of their premises (and of those tentacles which spring logically from them to twist and poison and anaesthetize every portion of our culture—social, economic, philosophic, artistic) to anything save a death-instinct grown disproportionately strong within us. Straws grasped by our fathers to keep them from drowning long ago became millstones about their children's necks.

And not all of us choose to perish. The past ten years have shown varied, repeated and unmistakable signs that the will to live is increasingly gripping the section. Axioms are being aired. Subjects long taboo are being discussed in the most reputable quarters. Our delusions are not everywhere clung to with the tenacity of desperation. Though our novels have not been the primary cause of the change, each year more of them reflect it. And if there should emerge among us an artist of sufficient vision and creative force to delineate the rightful objects of hate in this region he could now perhaps be read. One even suspects that, just as the individual who has regained equilibrium after a 'nervous breakdown' returns to life with a sensitiveness, a compassion, a perception that could not otherwise have been his, so a group which survives a similar experience probably has thereby greater potentialities within it for producing among its members those qualities which are the prerequisite for genius. And one suspects that the South, if it can altogether win its way back to health, if it can reject its remaining delusions without rejecting its personality, if it can reenter the main currents of life without slavishly following a channel cut, crudely, to another's needs will be peculiarly fitted, as a result of its near-century of frustration, for the creation and for the appreciation of a literature of deep human value. [Summer 1938]

✻ [Two Reviews]

THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN FICTION. By Sterling Brown. Associates in Negro Folk Education. 35 cents.

NEGRO POETRY AND DRAMA. By Sterling Brown. Associates in Negro Folk Education. 25 cents.

The Bronze Booklets, published in Washington by the Associates in Negro Folk Education, are an interestingly conceived and intelligently executed series of books centering around the cultural and historical aspects of Negro life. Sterling Brown's two recent contributions to the series add to the reputation for sound scholarship and unbiased critical judgments which are requisite for such a project. Mr Brown seems to have explored his subject exhaustively. He makes his judgments independently. Though he is aware when propaganda or condescension enters into a book, he distinguishes—when a distinction is possible—between an author's attitude of mind and his literary achievements.

Within the three fields which they cover, these books contain perhaps the most complete listing, with brief yet authoritative critical comment, of books by Negroes and by whites about Negroes, to be found anywhere.

The style of these books is uniformly competent. It is scholarly without being academic. It does not reach a level of richness sufficient to impel readers whose interest has not already been aroused by the subject-matter; yet the books, because of their content and the heretofore inadequate treatment of their subjects, deserve space on the library shelf of every college and town in the South. [Fall-Winter 1938-39]

❧ Snow White and the Share-Croppers

GRAPES OF WRATH. By John Steinbeck. Viking. \$2.75.

Few readers would fail to concede that *Grapes of Wrath* is an exceptionally good book. But those who claim that it is a masterpiece tread more treacherous ground than do those who call it masterly propaganda. The making of which distinction may or may not be quibbling. I think not. The book is definitely written with the aim of arousing the reader's sympathies for a group of people because of their economic plight. It points the corollary that the group will profit by uniting to meet their enemy. So far so good. For theirs are desperate needs, prolonged callousness to which may easily wreck the civilization in which they occur. And the man whose pen rights these wrongs may well decide that he has chosen the best use to which his talents could be put. Nor can any writer of this generation lay claim to first consideration who fails to recognize economic maladjustments and their disastrous effects on human beings. It is also true that one book cannot do everything. An artist must select. And whether the feeling that no novel can be unequivocally first-rate which fails to give new or deeper insights into human emotions and the intricacies of personality and personal relationships is bias on my part or a fundamental basis of criticism, I do not know. But I am certain that a novel which, even if only implicitly, weights the dice towards the conclusion that when economic evils (or any other single category of evils) have been eliminated people will live happily ever after, thereby proves itself romantic. . . . And there is something a little confusing, too, about combining with the premise that poverty is an evil the thesis that poor people are better than rich people; if there is truth here, it is truth that needs meditating on.

Grapes of Wrath tells the story of the Joad family, generically derogated in California today as "Okies." They are one small

unit in that west-moving horde of former farmers, later share-croppers, finally homeless destitutes ejected from the Dust Bowl area of our country by those impersonal, imponderable forces which have evolved out of our unplaning and uncaring economy.

We see the farm, including the tenant house, mowed down by that double-barreled machine, the tractor and the bank. We take the precarious worn-out-truck trip across the continent. We stop to patch threadbare tires and replace burned-out bearings. We watch the mirage, induced by rosy handbills, of a white cabin, green shade trees, free-fruit-for-all, fade inch by inch into a reality grimmer and more barren than that from which the migrants fled.

Though the book has many points of superiority over Harriet Beecher Stowe's, someone has, with acumen, called it the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Dust Bowl.

It is one of the many stories our country needs to be told in these days when America is girding self-righteous loins against the evils overseas; for in each section, each state, each town of our democracy, man blindly perpetrates against man, class against class, injustices and callousnesses which over a period of time are as lethal as the more dramatic implements of death employed today in Europe. And these stories need to be told by people who, like Steinbeck, can draw out of the reader sympathy at the same time as he pours in knowledge. Only propagandists who are more concerned with human beings than with a Cause and who also are talented artists can hope to open the eyes of a people to those evils which are a part of its own mores. And the texture of America's sins is so varied that a prophet is needed in each geographic region, each economic sphere, each psychological area of our country.

Steinbeck's device of using only a portion of the book to tell us about the Joads and employing alternate chapters to give in poetic prose the broader sociological current which uproots them and sweeps them on to destruction is splendid and gives the book its epic quality. Their style resembles, in part, that of Lorentz' *River*. The chapters concerned directly with the Joads are good, but not good enough. When a writer deals with a group of a lower cultural level than that of the potential reader of his book, there is the temptation to rely too heavily upon their uncouthness,

upon their quaintness, upon the tang of their speech and to bait the reader overmuch with the baldness of their sexual talk. Though Steinbeck does not capitalize on this in the manner that Caldwell does—that is, such seducing as he does is employed toward the end of saving our souls, not of exploiting them—I believe he assumes (along with so many of our generation) that there is a basic incompatibility between hardboiledness and romanticism; that the crustacean is immune to sentimentality; that when an author has depicted the crude manners of his characters he has attained a realistic attitude toward them. Whereas realism demands the probing for and accepting of truth, palatable or unpalatable, at every level of the human soul and of its relationships.

And Steinbeck is so intent on rousing us to action to save Ma and Tom that he has made Snow Whites out of them. They stand forth primarily as symbols of Goodness-in-Distress—Goodness nonetheless that it comes garbed in sharecropper idiom and sharecropper mores, and that Tom himself is an unrepentant murderer. The author seems to feel that we won't want to save them if he reveals them as having those inner conflicts and family frictions which we do not yet forgive our artists for revealing to us in ourselves, and which he may be justified in assuming would not make more palatable to us beings from another cultural stratum. It is not that he, like many of our writers, is totally unaware of subterranean pressures in his people's lives: safely distant from his immaculate major characters are the Seven Dwarfs, who each contribute a devious phase of human personality: Muley, clinging to the shadows of his old life when the substance of it is taken from him; Granpa, full of four-letter-words and vinegar, reduced to ignominy by buttons he can no longer master; Uncle John, tracked across the desert—tracked across all the deserts of his life—by Sin, and making for himself intermittent oases of drunkenness; Pa, haunted by his initial clumsiness with Noah. But Steinbeck the propagandist is too concerned with showing us the goodness of Ma and Tom and Casey to let Steinbeck the artist have his way with them. Or, judging by the author's other books, it may be a shade nearer the truth to suggest that Steinbeck the almost-artist is not yet wholly freed from those shackles of sentimentality which make us all reluctant to see how inextricably bound together are good and evil at all levels of our

lives; that Steinbeck can face truths in minor characters which he cannot also concede to those characters that mean more to him.

Be that as it may, Steinbeck is as interesting a writer as we have in America today. And as talented. He deserves the wide reading and acclaim he is getting. It is just that when a writer has as much as he has, one wants him to have more. And there is a chance that he has, potentially. [Fall 1939]

✻ Sigmund Freud: An Attempt at Appraisal*

There is no subject more beguiling to man than is man himself. And there is nothing in the concept of him as fallen angel which touches, in capacity to fire imagination and kindle courage, the picture of him as a four-legged brute who reared himself erect and out of thin air fashioned the boots by whose straps he forthwith pulled himself into a semblance of human dignity. Nor does any recounting of the exterior obstacles he met along this tortuous path—no tale of dinosaur or demon, of ice-age or flood, of mastery over fire or flint—approach in dramatic intensity the struggle that has beset him hour by hour through untold centuries, of antagonistic forces within, contesting each inch of his progress with methods more subterranean and devious and explosive than are any of the external instruments of death which in Europe today take tragic toll. And no novelist, no poet, no dramatist, has had quite the courage and the implemented scope of vision to look as deep and as long as did Freud at the humble soil from which our culture has sprung and to eschew the grandiose protagonists of the classics for this epic material within us. I cannot with equal sureness predict what the ultimate evaluation of psychoanalysis as a therapy will be as it is increasingly applied to those who have been disabled in their foray with reality; nor what the final decision will be when psychoanalysis as a scientific theory is some day weighed in the scales of a justice not purblind with prejudice. But there seems not a vestige of doubt that, if God will grant us equanimity with

* *The above essay was scheduled for publication in this issue of the Review before Freud's death last fall. It will be followed, in the spring number, by a brief review of each of his books that have been translated into English. Recent months have witnessed an accelerating interest in Freud and an increasing desire among laymen to make less nebulous their knowledge of his teachings. We hope these essays will, in part, meet this need.* [Original note.]

which to bear the horde of fools and faddists and plowhands who also must trek into this new-charted Atlantis of the soul, literature will be quickened by Freud's intuitions into a renaissance for which future generations will hold him in a gratitude that his contemporaries could not summon.

For Freud's death brings us sharply alive to the realization of how much more widely and passionately he has been reviled and ridiculed and worshiped than until now he has been read and understood. No person during the present century, with the improbable exception of Einstein, has made and in large part substantiated hypotheses which if finally accepted must so change the cosmology of man's mental life as will Freud's. And Einstein has directed his attention to a field concerning which the man in the street is wholly indifferent and which the interested scientist may judge with no deeper bias than that caused by reluctance to shift the gears of mental habit; whereas it has been Freud's preoccupation to delve into matters which are at the core of man's emotional nature and which the race throughout its generations has unremittingly and ingenuously and desperately striven to remain in ignorance of. Which means that those who will not take the trouble to acquaint themselves directly with his books nonetheless react strongly and defensively against the distorted fragments of his theses which trickle into their path. With the result that the person of this century most likely to achieve immortality went to his grave almost everywhere misunderstood by his contemporaries.

Whatever the position ultimately conceded Freud in the narrowly scientific world (and it will be a high one), he deserves unequivocal rank with the dozen foremost poet-philosophers of history. It is the boldness of his hypotheses, the universality of their application and their basic symbolic truth that are his first claim to eminence. The cornerstones on which his fame must rest are the recognition of the power and scope of the unconscious (a realm the existence of which had been discovered before him, but whose sway Freud vastly extended through his demonstration of determinism wherein he attributes all acts of the individual not brought about by interaction of the physical world and the conscious mind, to motivations from the unconscious); his recognition of infantile sexuality, of the Oedipus Complex and the

importance its solution holds for the lifelong health and happiness of the individual; and his postulate of a death instinct whereby the seeds of man's destruction are revealed implanted at the core of his being and capable of fruition without external fertilization. These are far-reaching concepts which uproot cherished illusions and cast unflattering lights on casual daily acts. But those who would dismiss them as unscientific must recall that hypothesis, which is an imaginative grasp of an uncharted region, an ability to project pattern-formations where others see only blankness or chaos, must precede proof. Realms very insufficiently investigated or incompletely experimented in—realms in which a broad basis of sound knowledge has not yet been established—are for the time being inaccessible to proof; which is not to state that it is impossible to deal with them intellectually or to arrive at moderately dependable conclusions about them. And Freud, before he has finished, has assembled from diverse fields evidence that falls with convincing neatness into patterns whose designs were set from observations in a widely different region. His writings are worth every effort at comprehension and speculation; and foreknowledge that certain of his theories will prove subject to revision, limitation, elaboration in no wise negates their importance and value. Particularly does it seem incumbent on novelists, critics and others who select human nature as their province to acquaint themselves with Freud's hypotheses and the evidence upon which he formulates them. I am not, of course, recommending a revival of that vogue of two decades ago in which ability to bandy about on one's tongue phrases from psychoanalytic jargon was open sesame to sophistication. And still less do I think it desirable that our artists discard their own vision and intuitions and devote themselves to penning imaginary case-histories in support of Freud's theories. But I do believe it imperative that we implement our vision and our intuitions with the major discoveries and insights achieved by the first-rate minds of our day, and that Freud is the one person of this century whom we can least afford to dismiss unheard.

With the publication a year or so ago by the Modern Library of *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, the non-professional man of ordinary means in America for the first time has comfortable access to enough of Freud's writings (though, un-

fortunately, not in every case his most philosophical or most convincing ones) to enable him to form independent opinion of the validity and worth of psychoanalytic discoveries. It is an opportunity which will be increasingly welcomed as readers who hitherto have known only biased versions of his ideas voice their revised opinions to others. And further impetus to the study is being added by that heightening of interest in a mortal which accrues to him at his death.

The daring and scope of Freud's imagination, the depth and range of his erudition, the tenacity with which he sought truth, his generosity in giving credit to others for their ideas, his quickness to withdraw or broaden hypotheses when new facts of his own or of others' findings indicated their inadequacy are stigmata by which he can be distinguished from most of his critics—and from his disciples as well. Always there were tentativeness and humility in his formulations until indisputable evidence had been assembled in their support. Another characteristic of his books is the frequency with which he merely touched in passing upon trains of thought that led from his work into innumerable allied fields of investigation, pausing only long enough to fire the reader's imagination. Freud's books hang together as do the novels in a saga: the main characters in one reappear as minor characters in the next; others are minor throughout, but leave the reader aware of their potentialities to become the protagonists in books as yet unwritten. The attributes he demonstrates are of inestimable worth; but they heap hardship on one who would, at their possessor's death, summarize and appraise his findings. The effort to condense within a few pages, to simplify and give a semblance of unity to something so complex, unorganized and unfinished as were Freud's writings (unfinished in the sense that he alone could have summarized correctly his last conclusions in the many realms of thought into which he penetrated; and he was always too engrossed in making new discoveries and conjectures to crystallize and make final briefs of his findings) must result unsatisfactorily. The only purpose these pages undertake is to interest the reader to the point where he will want to study the original books; and to afford him, perhaps, a framework upon which to assemble the facts and theories as he gathers them in

that reading. Only with these limitations in mind can the summations that follow be of worth.

It is the formative and prehistoric portion of the race's and the individual's life that Freud finds imbedded the experiences of determinative value for human character and for personal stability of emotions. An attempt to understand the man (the normal or the abnormal man) leads us straight to his father, the child; about whom clouds, of nine parts ignorance to one part glory, have trailed with sticky thickness through the centuries. Many of the concepts briefly touched on in the following paragraphs are original with Freud and are rejected by all save his close adherents; others are of wide currency and are accepted as truisms even by those to whom the word Freud still serves as emetic. I list heresies and platitudes side by side, feeling that truth is as frequently to be found in one as in the other:

The new-born baby comes into the world with no pre-established moral values and no concept of the conditions governing the outer world. He does, however, have instinctual urges, the gratifications of which are his whole concern. This early undifferentiated urge-motivated self which is all we are at birth—and the greater part of what we remain throughout life—Freud calls the *id*. He refers to it as “a seething cauldron of excitement.” It is motivated by the pleasure-principle. In it logic has no part; contradictions exist side by side in the *id* without evoking recognition of incompatibility. Were the *id* to function unaided, the individual would soon destroy himself in his blind strivings for gratification. But a portion of the *id* is gradually differentiated from the main self—that part of it which comes in contact with the outer world through the sense organs and becomes aware of external realities is called the *ego*. The *ego* throughout life draws its motive power from the *id* and directs its efforts toward gratifying the *id*'s impulses. But the *ego* “tinctures the pleasure-principle with the more exigent reality-principle”: in striving to give the *id* what it wants, it comes to realize that there are limits in time and place and degree as to what can be had, and modifies its activities accordingly. The *ego* is capable of profiting by experience, utilizes logic, and, above all, seeks to unify its realm. (Freud ascribes to the *ego*, when it is not too hard-pressed, a me-

chanical perfection that I cannot readily give credence to.) The ego reconciles as best it can the incompatible demands of its three masters: "goaded on by the id, hemmed in by the super-ego, and rebuffed by reality, the ego seeks to cope with its economic task of reducing the forces which work upon it to some kind of harmony." The *super-ego* is a third development or division of personality, and corresponds, roughly, to conscience. It is the commands, restrictions, moral judgments of our parents incorporated within us. It observes, passes judgment upon, apportion punishment to the ego; and the punishment is often of a cruelty not warranted by any of the facts yet alluded to.

Going back, as always we must, to the infant and following his development in another direction: There are certain parts of his body which respond pleurably to touch, and the first emotional satisfaction the baby experiences is in connection with these *erotogenic zones*. These unorganized pleasurable sensations centering in his own body are the beginnings of the *auto-erotic* phase of his life: a phase which is never relinquished, only modified and in part superseded by other stages of development. The first period of auto-erotism that becomes organized sufficiently to deserve a name is that in which sensations centering about the mouth are of special concern to the infant: a period in which nutriment and pleasure are obviously tied together. He gets from suckling satisfaction over and above that of obtaining nourishment, and all objects which arouse his interest are carried to his mouth. This *oral* phase, too, never passes away entirely from any of us; character traits and habits rooted here are to be found in varying degrees in older people: in thumb-suckers, excessive smokers and drinkers, in those who derive major sexual pleasure from kissing. The next portion of his body upon which his attention and emotions are fixed (in part because its zones are also erotogenic, in part because society early demands that he control the functions with which it is concerned) is that involved in the processes of elimination. Here for the first time the infant wields power and dispenses wealth. When the little king is seated on his humble but none the less regal throne, he can please or at will withhold pleasure from his adult subjects. A power not lightly relinquished for the dubious compensations of growing up. But none the less the interest centering here is in large part absorbed,

as it were, during the further development of the normal person; to reassert itself, psychoanalysis claims, in certain character traits which are to be found in those adults whose involvement in the period was unduly prolonged or intense (the character traits are orderliness, thriftiness, obstinacy). In slightly neurotic people this stage is more directly represented by constipation, colonitis, etc., and a hangover from it is widespread in the liking for dirty jokes. This stage is followed by the *phallic* period, in which interest centers in the external sex organs and fear of castration takes hold upon the child. At puberty this phase gives way to the *genital* stage of development, at which time a number of elements in the above-mentioned component instincts have been left behind or turned to other uses, while the remaining ones are diverted into the genital organization to serve as auxiliaries to mature sexual acts and pleasures.

The high tide of opposition to Freud has centered around his belief that sex is a continuum from cradle to grave, not a visitation which descends full-blown at puberty and departs at menopause. Freud's use of the word sex in a broader sense than that of ordinary speech takes its cue both from the gamut of feelings and intensities to which language, off-guard, applies the word love; and from psychoanalytic findings which reveal the roots of all emotional relationships (those of children, of perverts, of neurotics, as well as the range of an adult's ties with other people and with himself) to be the same, and deserving of this name, when the veil of inhibitions and sublimations is lifted. He demonstrates that experiences which the *libido* (the energy of the sexual instincts, throughout their development and ramifications) encounters in an early stage of a child's growth in large part determine his method and ability for dealing with subsequent relationships. In the course of healthful development, one's libido attaches first to himself, second to the mother, third to the parent of opposite sex (which gives the girl an extra hurdle), fourth to contemporaries of the same sex. Only after the various stages of erotism and of object-choice indicated (with, of course, many gradations and substitutions beyond the crude outline listed) have been passed through successfully is the individual ready to enter maturely and adequately into the pleasures and the obligations of marriage and parenthood. Needless to say, the

stages of development are not always passed through smoothly. As a result either of hereditary differences or of premature or excessive gratifications, *fixations* may occur at one or another stage; and when the individual later meets obstacles which prove too difficult and which he attempts to solve by *repression*, the libido may flow back to this earlier and happier period in his growth: a process called *regression*.

The first physical and emotional pleasures (sexual pleasures, when the term is used as Freud uses it; justification for which can scarcely be denied by one who studies the evidence) that a child experiences are in connection with his own body. And, after a few chance excitations, the infant learns that there is a respect in which he is not wholly at the mercy of the adult world: that he may achieve independent satisfactions through the stimulation of his erotogenic zones for the purpose of arousing pleasurable feelings. The manner and degree in which these masturbatory proclivities are outgrown (whether one overcomes them himself; whether there is a smooth transition into more socially profitable activities; the wisdom with which the parents play their part, in case the child is detected and 'disciplined') have tremendous weight in determining the individual's future character and nervous stability, for the tensions and attitudes here acquired may affect decisions, abilities and personality throughout a lifetime.

Though the child's first preoccupation is with his own body and its urges, man is so constituted that other people are also needed to afford him the gratification he desires. Because of the love and protection his parents give the child, they constitute his first external object-choice. And among the satisfactions he requires of them (of one of them more specifically, at which time the other is resented as an obtruder and an object of jealousy) are included sensual ones; though the child at this period does not conceive of sex as do adults, he definitely wants physical demonstrations of love, over and above those of affection and assurances of security. This relationship of a child with its parents (called, in its entirety, the *Oedipus Complex*) normally should be abandoned or thoroughly changed by the time the *latency period* sets in, at about the age of five.

From then until the beginning of puberty sexuality declines in its intensity; and it is during this period that the feelings of

shame, disgust, morality develop—feelings which hold in check the strong sexual urges that awaken again at puberty. (Freud considers this division of the sexual life, which is peculiar to human beings, a possible cue towards man's propensity to nervous disturbances, and feels that in the as yet dimly grasped pre-history of the race there must have been some momentous event which left as its trace this break in development.)

The mental apparatus of the human being is divided by Freud into three systems or qualities: the conscious, the pre-conscious, the unconscious. He defines consciousness as merely an organ of perception. That which at any moment it perceives may be either portions of the external world as brought to it by the senses, or portions of the pre-conscious which come to its attention. The *pre-conscious* is the storehouse of those experiences, facts, phantasies, logical processes, which are accessible to the individual's conscious mind without particular effort. The *unconscious* contains those memories, desires, etc., which are not available to consciousness under ordinary circumstances. The unconscious functions according to primitive and non-rational mechanisms which it is difficult for the conscious mind to comprehend.

Freud postulates that the human being is motivated by two primary instincts: the life instinct and the death instinct. The life instinct, or love, or Eros moves to unite people with ever wider and deeper bonds of libidinal ties. The death instinct, or hate, or aggressiveness tends toward disunion and destruction, of the self and of others. The workings of these two opposed instincts simultaneously and towards the same object constitute a feeling of *ambivalence*, which, under the impact of civilization and its moral standards, accumulates the feeling of guilt. A feeling which in its conscious and unconscious forms "haunts us all and makes of our culture a burden that increasing portions of the people are unable to bear." To the infant, nothing is 'bad.' Later, those impulses which are put into action, detected by the parent and met with by punishment or by withdrawal of the evidences of love are 'bad.' At this stage it is the being detected that is to be avoided, not the act itself. But with the establishment of the super-ego, it comes about that the act, and finally the mere impulse towards the act, constitutes wickedness and suffices to overwhelm the self with feelings of guilt. In early childhood the

ego, not yet strong and capable of dealing with these 'bad' impulses through adequate evaluation of them or through some process of *sublimation* (whereby they are rechanneled into socially desirable feelings and acts) knows no way to meet the situation save by *repression*. But to repress an act or an impulse is merely to banish it from the realm of consciousness wherein there are at least potentialities for dealing with it adequately, into the unconscious, wherefrom it proceeds to function by processes not amenable to reason, logic, standards of comparative importance; and where it acquires a peculiar immortality, a never-depleted freshness and vigor.

Material repressed into the unconscious reasserts itself in powerful subterranean ways. Freud believes that every mental or emotional impulse or act of an individual which cannot be accounted for through stimuli from the external world or from somatic sources or from the conscious mind, is determined by these unconscious materials.

One of his most valuable demonstrations is that neurosis is not a distinct and unaccountable phenomenon, but rather a distortion, a shift in proportion, a usurpation of power by forces already existent and readily detectable in the daily functioning of the most normal person. He builds up, in the course of his experiments and investigations, irrefutable proof that identical mechanisms are to be seen at work in chance actions, in slips of the tongue, in the functionings of wit, in the dream, and in the symptom-formations of neurotics; and these mechanisms he shows to be those of the unconscious mind. In psychoanalysis as a therapy, strands leading from each of these manifestations are followed back to their source wherein is revealed the repression from which they sprang. The technique by which these connections are traced is an intricate one for which detailed study, wide range of knowledge and suitable personality are prerequisites. In addition to the 'free' cues which may come to the analyst from the sources referred to above, a great deal is revealed by 'free' associations (a misnomer, since the theory of psychoanalysis is based upon these associations being unconsciously determined). And in the course of every successful treatment the phenomenon of *transference* occurs. That is, a certain amount of the patient's libido attaches itself to the analyst and he comes

for a transitory period to stand, in the patient's eyes, for the person around whom his primary ambivalence centers—usually the person important in the emotional life of the patient during the days when his ego was in its formative period and was unable to deal adequately with the incongruence of his urges and society's demands. Through the instrumentality of this transference it is possible for the early troublesome scenes to be unearthed and for the repressed emotions to be given air and outlet. In the process of treatment, however, the analyst meets with marked *resistance* on the part of the patient, an unwillingness and inability to co-operate in the treatment; a resistance which is indicative both of the emotional force that goes into forming and preserving a repression, and of the secondary gain that accrues to the patient through his symptom. It is in overcoming this resistance that the analyst's abilities are hardest taxed, and for which the transference is indispensable.

The discoveries and hypotheses of psychoanalysis are not restricted to the cure of neurotics or to theories regarding neurosis. On the contrary, these constitute hardly more than a laboratory wherein broader concepts are formulated and tested. Psychoanalysis draws freely on anthropology, the myth, religion, on clan, family and group relationships for inspiration and in turn sheds eerie but convincing light upon more obscure aspects of those subjects. And not only is understanding of Freud's theses invaluable for the comprehension of those timeless aspects of human nature which preoccupy contemplative minds, but it is also indispensable as background for a realistic grappling with the more dramatic problems whose immediacy attracts those who deem themselves 'practical.' Particularly does the crisis now confronting the world require illumination from so penetrating a searchlight as Freud's.

For the blood-letting in Europe today, and America's more negative but, in portent, no less lethal blindness to human needs have to an unprecedented degree quickened people into concern for the welfare—for the survival, perhaps—of Western civilization. Seldom before in history has a comparable portion of printers'-ink and tea-talk been directed sincerely towards efforts to understand our problems and formulate solutions for them. And seldom has more drivel been published and mouthed. Drivel,

because, for all the pedantic phraseology and schooled tedium with which steps two, three, four et sequentia of the dialectics are reasoned out with pride and pain by a race that submits itself masochistically to the rigors of logic, the all-powerful major premises of our lives still stem unweeded from the seductive lush soil of 'would-it-were.' There is hardly a topic among those that generally attract the serious minds of today, discussion of which would not fall into a more economic, esthetic and intellectually satisfying orbit were it subjected to the steady centripetal pull of those basic truths Freud has sunk his shaft into, instead of following the prevalent erratic curves determined by partial insulation from them, alternating with violent, unreasoned repulsions against them. [Winter 1939-40]

‡ Three Native Sons*

Native Son and *Trouble in July* invite simultaneous discussion both through their similarities and through their contrasts: one by a southern Negro, the other by a southern white; one set in urban Illinois in midwinter, the other in rural Georgia in midsummer; both involving accusations of rape that did not occur; one concerned with a petty criminal who fortuitously became involved in a major crime, the other with a boy whose offense was to be at the wrong place at the wrong time; both dipping heavily into melodrama; one stressing the effect of race discrimination and injustice upon a non-heroic member of the oppressed group, the other the workings of prejudice and lust in the barren hearts and muddled heads of the pillars of White Supremacy. Both are required reading—and both require strong stomachs for the reading.

Ersine Caldwell we all know—or have chosen not to know. There has been no basic change in him. It is almost equally impossible to, and not to, take him seriously; a dilemma which he seems to share with us. Without doubt he has talent and an ability, seldom equalled by any American writer except Ring Lardner, to pin morons under the microscope and expose to our view the mysterious workings of God's wonders in them. But he is more ambivalent than Lardner towards imbecilities. Where Lardner's artistic mastery came through his hatred of stupidity and evinced itself as realistic satire, Caldwell's more exuberant and less disciplined facility seems to come in part through sheer sensuous joy in running his fingers through a moron's hair and soul and brain. But is not thereby wholly accounted for.

One gets the impression that the two-legged-bitch-in-heat scenes, which recur so frequently as almost to constitute a Cald-

* Richard Wright: *Native Son*. Harpers. \$2.50.

Ersine Caldwell: *Trouble in July*. Duell, Sloan and Pearce. \$2.50.

William Faulkner: *The Hamlet*. Random House. \$2.50. [Original Note.]

well trademark, are put in for double purpose: as slop for the pornographic and slap for the prudish; and that the author is as unaware as are his characters that there are readers who fall in neither group—readers who nevertheless share many of his dissatisfactions with society, value his talents, and respect great portions of his personality. One infers that his unawareness is emotionally, not intellectually, determined; and hence is clung to the more tenaciously. It is as if he is forced continuously to rasp himself (and that amplification of himself, his reader) on the prongs of the race's imbecilities and crassnesses and dignity-depleted gyrations lest, left to his more natural bent, he begin seeking again among men for a sanity and justice and beauty which at some decisive time and place were not available to him in quantity adequate to slake his thirst; and which he can with more ease raucously deny the existence of than bear the torment of recurrent disappointments in the wake of each new indulgence in belief. A very human and comprehensible reaction, but not the earmark of an artist who has freed himself from the dilemmas of his characters. If there is truth in this theory (and luckily the ambivalence of the human soul is such that the holding of one theory regarding it does not forbid simultaneous adherence to what in matters of less complex origin would seem incongruent concepts) then I hasten to add that towards the end of this book he takes a step forward: for he here permits the hero to evince, at considerable cost to himself, concern for the welfare of a being who has no claims on him which are recognized by his group—nor by many groups above his—nor by self-interest; though he takes us through a dreary desert before granting us this oasis.

With individual exceptions, the South's response to Caldwell is of three categories: the principal one is deaf ear or cold shoulder; a second group applies verbal tar and feathers to his name; a few, without weighing them, accept his castigations and slurs masochistically. The North, so far as can be apprehended from this side of the Great Divide, is more nearly unanimous, seeming to say: We are predisposed to accept the Caldwell-Faulkner versions of the region as Truth, but in order not to let our verdict appear too hasty, we will give you till we count ten to produce a novelist who is their equal in talent and power and in willingness to abandon magnolia-and-moss stereotypes, and who can paint

an equally vivid and convincing (and pleasing?) picture, with different content. Which is perhaps a legitimate demand—and one that, in my judgment, will be filled soon.

There is a tremendous amount both of truth and of falseness in Caldwell's books. But they are basically the truth and falseness of caricature and of allegory, not of realism. One cannot, however, feel that they are here admixed with clear intent of producing either caricature or allegory, nor can they be unconfusedly so accepted by the reader—one obstacle being the bona fide realism which is a part of their surface content: a realism not only artistically self-evident, but supplied just now with timely documentation by the East Point flogging exposures which grace our headlines. Instead they seem to be in part not-too-deeply-pondered reaction against intolerable conditions as envisaged by eyes which respond to truth only of delimited wave-lengths; in part, that aspect of truth deemed by the author most useful for plucking two birds with one book (feathers from the tail of the southern peacock, golden eggs from the northern goose). My quarrel with Caldwell is not that he tells too much, but too little. For, granting him a legitimate romping-ground of hyperbole, all he tells has happened, or could happen, here. But mankind's tragedy is not, as Caldwell implies, that he failed to acquire a soul, or, having acquired it, permitted it to atrophy; but that the while it pulsates strong within he swathes it in sentiment and platitude, insulates a major portion of his acts from its influence, and allows it to operate only within logic-tight compartments. And this is true at every level of economic and cultural well-being or depravity.

Richard Wright has been less well known though the content and the publicity of *Native Son* combine to make his a name to be reckoned with in all current discussions of American fiction. The book has its faults and its limitations, and several times Mr. Wright skates on thin psychological and sociological ice, but in the main both his premises and his methods are justified. He has sincerity and power and he has something important to say. If he can do as well by members of his race from other intellectual and social levels (and there is reason to assume he can) then he will be remembered by future critics, too, quite a while after most of the luminaries of today have passed from the scene. For, grain

by grain, with unremitting zeal through the centuries wherever the races have had contact, white hands have deposited on black soil the ore from which are mined drama and tragedy. The vein is rich and wide, and has long awaited a writer with the understanding, the power and the tools for extracting its metal. Mr. Wright has power and talent and also freedom from that self-consciousness which vitiates so much of the fiction written by Negroes. I believe he has the sensitiveness and stamina to bring to a more completely rounded maturity the understanding and perspective he already has in rare degree. And I believe that he may not remain overlong in the delusion, blindly clung to by so many of the talented young men of today, that the sound and fury which pervade their work are the source of their power rather than weeds flourishing in the same soil which must be uprooted before their life-giving grain can develop its full potentialities.

Except for his too great reliance on blood and thunder, Richard Wright's only major error is his assumption that race prejudice and economic discrimination are the primary factors in the formation of criminals. These do constitute crime's most favorable habitat, but to that limited degree to which a distinction can be made, perverse personalities are begot psychologically rather than sociologically. Mr. Wright is oblivious neither to psychiatry nor to social pressures, nor has he made such crude separation as I may seem to imply, but he weights his scales inaccurately, even if almost imperceptibly, when he puts his emphasis on the *psychological* results of *sociological* causes. For though it is imperative that society make radical and rapid adjustment of its prejudices and its economic maldistributions, it must do so because (again making a hairline distinction) the present scheme jeopardizes primarily the *bodies* of the oppressed, the *souls* of the oppressors. When economic and caste barriers have been leveled to whatever degree is compatible with human nature, only one step will have been taken along the labyrinth by which may be approached an era in which hate and asocial urges have been eliminated from human beings. For long before a child's horizon has broadened into awareness of economic and caste inequalities his personality ordinarily has been shaped by pressures within the home. If his early emotional needs there are met too scantily,

too lavishly, too harshly, too irregularly, there is engendered an excess of ambivalence and frustration which imperils his capacity for harmony with himself and with his fellows. His standing in the social and economic world is of course an important factor in determining whether his hate shall later evince itself in crime; but there are other outlets as disastrous—to himself, and perhaps to society. (I am aware that a child's security within his home is in part a product of the security his parents have in the outside world; but there are other, deeper, determinants.) The members of any minority group have psychological burdens to bear over and above those to which people in general are subjected. And when one belongs to a group to whom society accords neither the means of filling its physical needs nor opportunity to achieve a position of respect in the community, only the individual most fortunate in his constitutional heritage and in his early family adjustments can escape sinking either into a state of non-productivity bred of hopelessness, or into more active enmity against people and codes not concerned with administering justice to his group. And there is no minority group in America against whom the odds are greater and more unremitting than against the Negro. I welcome every effort, including Mr. Wright's, towards alleviating them. But *Native Son* would have been a deeper and truer book had its author not over-simplified the genesis of Bigger's anti-social impulses. (Mr. Wright does devote a few pages to showing Bigger inside his home—and at odds with his family—but he seems to put them in as proof that Bigger is a 'bad nigger' rather than as cue to the genesis of his 'badness'.)

Native Son, baited (though probably not for the purpose) with incontrovertible evidence that the Yankee-Liberal-Communist attempts at solving the race problem result in tragedy and violence to white and black alike, is getting a wider reading here than probably would have been accorded it had its setting been the South and had it dealt with the malfunctioning of indigenous brands of good intentions. But once we've begun to read, we'll hardly stop, and once we've read we'll hardly emerge with our preconceptions intact. For, beneath the miscegenated superstructure of a thesis-thriller novel, Mr. Wright has written a powerful human story that has little basic regard for the patterns by which

it was consciously shaped. Man's knowledge, and hence his conscience, has evolved to the point where there is scant likelihood that great fiction will in this generation be written by those who are blind or callous to the injuries inflicted on individuals by society, particularly through the mediums of economics, caste, family. But neither will great fiction be written by those whose primary desire is a specific social reform and who utilize fiction as a means of propaganda, curtailing their perceptions to the dimensions of their thesis. Richard Wright and John Steinbeck are pre-eminent among those who display great talent and capacity to plumb inadequately charted depths of the human spirit, but who as yet are in partial bondage to the formulae of their groups.

Faulkner even more than Caldwell and Wright is preoccupied by the decadent, destructive, amoral, irrational forces at work in human beings. But whereas Caldwell too often tends to present degeneracy as a peep-show, putting himself and his reader on a level with his exhibit, Faulkner is more than apt to be caught by his own undertow and swept, his reader gasping after him, into swift deep uncharted currents where one whose habitat is air has difficulty getting breath. And whereas Wright inclines toward over-simplification through attributing too great weight to racial and economic causations, Faulkner is so obsessed with affirming the psychic primacy of Evil that he fails to apprehend how inter-related it is, in all its manifestations, with Good. Faulkner's great gift is his ability to put us in direct contact with a substratum of motivating factors which the human race has closed its eyes to in that brash tightrope-walk across infinity which it calls sanity. And we are indebted to him, as to few other fiction writers, for convicting us of the existence of these hidden forces; but we cannot concede to him either clear intellectual grasp or disciplined artistic mastery of them. He is rather a by-product of their malfunctioning: symptom and brilliant symbol of the poison which permeates the core of our culture—useful perhaps even more as evidence that it has a core than as index that decay resides there.

Faulkner's novels share many of the characteristics of dreams: distortion, condensation, discontinuity, basic validity. They utilize the tools of ordinary 'rational' life but disregard the order

and conventions whereby the wake-a-day person charts his course. His weirder passages are perhaps more analogous to deliriums than to dreams. Faulkner is particularly interesting to us because the delirium from which he suffers stems more from the psychopathology of his region than from himself. And just as the deliriums of a fevered individual are more violent and more devastating than are the dreams of one in a healthful state, so the novels which tap the unconscious of a fevered culture are characterized by deeper turmoil and horror than is the literature of a group at ease with its soul.

In *The Hamlet* Faulkner deals with an isolate, self-contained, self-devouring community to whom the glories, the defeats, the foibles of history, the vagaries and grandeurs of geography are of no concern. From books and schools his characters require no more than the ability to sign a name and to compute, in retrospect at least, who got the worst of the last ten cent or ten dollar deal. The motivating factors are curiosity, greed and lust, which are in certain individuals at times mitigated by a smattering of human kindness, but ordinarily function unimpeded.

The book is divided into four parts which have little to do one with another. In the first Flem Snopes, heartwarming as an eel, insinuates himself into the community and corners its meager financial market. In part two, Eula—later to marry Flem—burgeons forth as sex-carrier, herself immune to the infection (as to everything else except food), but emanating a force which produces flare-ups in all males who come within eye-nose range of her. This section contains incidental characterizations of Eula's teacher and of her brother, which are among the best Faulkner has done anywhere. The third portion presents the idiot Ike Snopes, cousin to Flem and co-heir with him and another relative in a thirty dollar legacy, manipulation of which sets Flem on the road to plutocracy. Ike's romance and tragedy with a cow calls forth some of Faulkner's worst and best writing. Part four is hilarious farce and horseplay. The only thread connecting the sections is that they are all set in Frenchman's Bend and all involve members of the Snopes family. Though the book is short on unity and coherence, it contains a triple portion of emphasis, and the emphasis is on the aberrations of the human soul. If Faulkner were able to employ his tremendous talent toward

showing to us depravity, greed, amorality as they exist in the hidden recesses of those beings who are sufficiently amenable to civilization's mould to function as respected units of our culture he would do unique service both to littérature and to humanity. But he is lured by the bizarre, the decadent, the awe-ful as is a moth to a flame; and like the moth, is through his tropism blinded to all that the flame might have illumined were he able to utilize his unerring ability to approach its light range, without rushing therefrom into its consuming fire. [Spring 1940]

✻ [A Review]

THE MIND OF THE SOUTH. By W. J. Cash. Knopf. \$3.75.

We who have an emotional stake in the South and an intellectual interest in the origins of its mind-sets cannot fail to recognize the historical significance of this book. For nothing comparable to *The Mind of the South* has come out of the region before: nothing in our literature so to blend art and science and compassion into their requisite proportions—or quicken the hearts and minds of those who prize inquiry into truth.

Our social scientists have been busy for a generation laying the foundations without which the book could not have been written, and for a decade now there have been signs that their knowledge has been seeping through to unencrusted minds here and there, catching root where it could, seeking a soil from which literature could spring. But our men of letters have for the most part gone their predetermined ways, hostile or oblivious to the array of information laid before them by these pioneers in regional fact-finding. Still deeper has been their resistance to the discoveries of psychoanalysis and anthropology, illuminating to any culture, and altogether indispensable to self-understanding by a people whose frustrations have pushed from their conscious minds the reasons for their acts.

Mr. Cash's inquiry into causes and effects is honest and penetrating, provocative and imaginative. Not the smallest of its virtues, and one that should prove disarming to that lessening number among us whose loyalty to the South evinces itself in self-deception, is the sincerity and tenderness with which the book is written. Each page, however unflattering its diagnosis, bears interlinear evidence of its author's affection for his people. It is Mr. Cash's distinction that he has used his emotions and his mind each to augment the other in his quest for understanding of the paradoxes that characterize our culture.

It is inevitable that comparisons be made between this book and Van Wyck Brooks' studies of New England—though the per-

sonalities of the two men are unlike, and the added complexities of the South, the unconscious level at which its major motivations take place, confront Cash with problems more elusive than those Brooks faced. But each man brings to his task an intimacy with his region, a contemplative and appraising mind, a literary style which give overtones to the factual content of his book. Perhaps it would be more pertinent to think of Vernon Louis Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought*, in Volume II of which is a section, itself called "The Mind of the South," that is the most acute and comprehensive judgment that has heretofore appeared of our ideals and practices as they revealed themselves in the writings of pre-Civil War southerners. In Parrington's third volume, unfinished when he died, is only the outline of a section to have been called "The Hesitant South" which would have brought his story into present times. Until now, one who wished to follow the channeling of southern thought and acts through its literature has had no authoritative, illuminating, unbiased source of information comparable to Parrington's uncompleted volumes. Cash's approach to his subject, however, is different from Parrington's—the older man being concerned specifically with our literary and political documents, and having received his knowledge of the region primarily from its printed accounts of itself; whereas Cash is equally interested in all phases of our culture and began drawing in his impressions through the pores of his skin the day he was born. The great historian of American thought, in his unfinished writings, pointed the path, suggested values for a study of southern culture. This new book, in its more personalized and generalized way, tells us things about ourselves which no other critic has attempted in so thoroughgoing and probing a manner . . . Still more apt, though they wrote on different subjects, is a comparison of Cash with Pierre Van Paassen: for in each personality the journalist merges with artist-philosopher-critic to give warmth and immediacy to his report on life. You will find in *The Mind of the South* as in *Days of Our Years* an intimacy, a sense of participation, which in no wise lessen the accuracy of its judgments but contribute to its appeal.

Mr. Cash concerns himself, among other things, with the Southern Myth, its historical falseness, the emotional dilemmas that called it into being and insured its survival; the effects of

the frontier on our culture; the forces aggravating and mitigating class consciousness; the co-existence of individualism and intolerance; race, leisure, romanticism, rhetoric, religion, Southern Womanhood, and their relation one with another; paternalism, demagoguery, evangelism, violence, and the patterns they have made.

One who looks clear-eyed into our past can hardly fail to observe that the South during almost a century has exhibited symptoms analogous to those of an individual who, confronted with psychic pressures beyond his capacity to endure, retreats from reality and creative development into delusions and fixations. Given the internal ambivalences and the external frustrations which our people two and three generations ago experienced, it is not easy to see how it could have been otherwise. The difficult thing to account for has been the tenacity with which we, their children, in whom the psychopathic state is perpetuated by tradition rather than precipitated by trauma, have clung to the old fantasies, closing our eyes to unpleasant actualities as if we, too, were enervated and baffled past the point of coping again with life. Mr. Cash's book is one of the strongest of the evidences that have been accumulating in recent years that psychic strength is returning to our region. And not the least encouraging thing about *The Mind of the South* is the promise it holds that out of these decades of unresolved conflicts is being born a depth of understanding, a subtlety, a richness which a culture, no less than an individual, can reach only by the hard path. [Winter 1940-41]

✻ [A Review]

DUSK OF DAWN. By W. E. B. Du Bois. Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$3.00.

Dusk of Dawn should be read by people throughout the world who are interested in human relationships. Particularly by Anglo-Saxons and by southerners. Not only is the book important to us for its intrinsic merits, which are considerable, but because we of the western world have never permitted ourselves a balanced diet in our reading and thinking, and our civilization suffers both chronically and acutely from deficiency diseases which Dr. Du Bois' book can in part remedy, or set us on the trail for remedying.

As its author recognizes, this autobiography has significance over and above that of the life-history of the exceptional individual anywhere. Du Bois has been a leader, during critical decades of world history, in a minority group that has known oppression throughout its centuries of contact with other races. His experiences leave him with things to say that give pause to those of us who would shed American blood on foreign soil in democracy's name. He gives us a perspective on indigenous evil which the native white, unaided, does not readily reach. And he renounces violence, on practical no less than moral grounds, as a mechanism by which even the age-long victims of mass-injustice should seek equality among men.

The sections of the book recounting the clashes between him and other leaders who advocated conflicting means of seeking inter-racial humaneness, while of historical significance and rightly included here, and dealt with scrupulously by the author, fall short of the remaining portions of the autobiography in which high perspective of vision and magnanimity of soul are reached more easily. He admits, too, an aloofness of spirit that permits an impersonal coolness in casual relationships—a deficiency shared by others of us who have less obvious external justification for

it, and who compensate less adequately than he in dedication of our lives to the service of humanity in the abstract.

The book comes from one of the most courageous minds functioning in America today, out of experiences paradoxically more rich and varied and interesting than often fall to the lot of man. Though the ordinary reader will not find uniform appeal on all its pages, he will be the loser if he turns them too hurriedly. For he may skip such passages as these:

"It is difficult to let others see the full psychological meaning of caste segregation. It is as though one, looking out from a dark cave in a side of an impending mountain, sees the world passing and speaks to it; speaks courteously and persuasively, showing them how these entombed souls are hindered in their natural movement, expression and development; and how their loosening from prison would be a matter not simply of courtesy, sympathy and help to them, but aid to all the world. One talks on evenly and logically in this way, but notices that the passing throng does not even turn its head, or, if it does, glances curiously and walks on. It gradually penetrates the minds of the prisoners that the people passing do not hear; that some thick sheet of invisible but horribly tangible plate glass is between them and the world. They get excited; they talk louder; they gesticulate. Some of the passing world stops in curiosity; these gesticulations seem so pointless; they laugh and pass on. They still either do not hear at all, or hear but dimly, and even what they hear, they do not understand. Then the people within may become hysterical. They may scream and hurl themselves against the barriers, hardly realizing in their bewilderment that they are screaming in a vacuum unheard and their antics may actually seem funny to those outside looking in. They may even, here and there, break through in blood and disfigurement, and find themselves faced by a horrified, implacable and quite overwhelming mob of people frightened for their own existence . . . It is hard, under such circumstances, to be philosophical and calm and to think through a method of approach and accommodation between castes. The entombed find themselves not simply trying to make the outer world understand their essential and common humanity, but even more, as they become inured to their experiences, they have to keep re-

minding themselves that the great and oppressing world outside is also real and human and essentially honest."

" . . . In my life the chief fact has been race—not so much scientific race as that deep conviction of myriads of men that congenital differences among the main masses of human beings absolutely condition the individual destiny of every member of a group. Into the spiritual provincialism of this belief I have been born, and this fact has guided, embittered, illuminated and enshrouded my life."

"There is no way in which the American Negro can force this nation to treat him as an equal until the unconscious cerebration and folkways of the nation, as well as its rational, deliberate thought among the majority of whites, are willing to grant equality . . . Intelligent propaganda, legal enactment and reasoned action must attack the conditioned reflexes of race hate and change them."

"The South of 1933* was not the South of 1897. In many respects it had improved and the relations between the races were better. Nevertheless, the South is not a place where a man of Negro descent would voluntarily and without good reason choose to live . . . The better classes, with gracious manners and liberal outlook, exist and slowly grow; but with these I would have little contact, and fear of the mob would restrain their meeting me or listening to me."

. . . You may not sleep well after an evening with Dr. Du Bois. But squirming around in bed for an hour or so hunting a comfortable spot to lay one's soul is not an exorbitant price, as things go in this world, to give for a little knowledge. Those who get it first-hand pay more.

[Winter 1940-41]

* *The year Du Bois returned to Atlanta University.* [Original Note.]

✿ [A Review]

THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER. By Carson McCullers. Houghton Mifflin Co. \$2.50.

The South, with its long history of reactionary and counter-reactionary fiction, should welcome Carson McCuller's novel. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* concerns itself with human beings and their relationships, their hungers and their isolation, the injuries they inflict one upon another. There is no attempt, conscious or unconscious, on the author's part to romanticize or justify or in any way to gloss over; nor to "exhibit" or recriminate or reform. She has simply looked, with eyes void of conventional biases and made discerning by imagination, at the life around her, and has told us what she sees. The result is a book which offers as much, both in promise and attainment, as any novel to come out of the region in the year; perhaps, if one considers the age of its author (she is twenty-four), in many years.

The book is held together structurally by as tenuous and questionable a thread as that which bound *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*: four people who have little or no contact one with another seek out a deaf mute to confide in; each, through the exigencies of his needs, ascribing to the mute a richness of personality, a self-sufficiency, a wisdom which could not so long have been postulated in a person equipped with speech by which to give himself away (and which Singer himself finally refutes by putting a bullet through his head when a second mute, a simple-minded person who deteriorates further mentally during the course of the story, but who alone had given Singer satisfying companionship, dies). But though the reader squirms a little at this straining after allegory, the author gives us so much undiluted truth, imaginatively conceived and realistically grounded, in the graphically told accounts of her four main characters and their families, that we accept the whole gratefully. The conflicts of race, class, poverty, sex, family as they work themselves out in the lives of her

people are faced and described unequivocally, yet without overshadowing our interest in them individually.

This is one of the few southern novels to appear since the *Review* began five years ago which does not fall into any of the Eight Ruts which L. E. S. divertingly and accurately catalogued in her Spring 1939 *Dope*. We look forward to Miss McCuller's next novel (though our expectations are lessened by the fact that it is scheduled for publication within a twelve-month of her first; for every writer, particularly one so young, needs time between books). [Winter 1940-41]

✿ [A Review]

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN. By James Agee and Walker Evans. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.50.

Through 470 unremitting pages James Agee bombards the reader's mind with grueling, monotonous, self-conscious, affronted, dedicated, humble, arrogant, vitriolic, tender, incoherent, cumulatively unforgettable facsimiles of three Alabama tenant-farming families, and castigations of a society apathetic to its sins against them. Walker Evans' documentary photographs stamp on the eye and soul 32 stark, haunting images and after-images of squalor and erosion.

Mr. Agee gets under your skin, in your hair, up and down your spine, to the pit of your stomach, under the callouses of your conscience in his all-out assault on complacency, stupidity, insensateness and the varied devices of sanity and perspective by which human beings limit their vision to what they can bear to see or have been conditioned to see. He makes both a philosophy and a fetish of eschewing selectivity and other accepted technics, cultivated disciplines and assumed obligations of art; though the while he bangs the door resoundingly in art's face he goes skilfully about the task of adjusting his shutters at just the right angle to insure her ingress at maximum velocity through the window.

You'll find in these pages many of the strengths and weaknesses, some of the grandeur and grandioseness of Thomas Wolfe, Proust, Joyce, Walt Whitman and the prophet Ezekiel.

In 1936 Agee and Evans came down to make for a New York magazine a verbal and photographic report on the daily living and environment of an average white tenant-farming family. Taking stock as they went along the young men decided they couldn't see the job through as planned. They found the family (three families), lived an intense month with them and, after five years of vicissitudes with publishers, wrestling with their souls, appraisals of conflicting philosophies, there emerged in-

stead this book—the first in a projected series of three. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* is filled with violent social protest, deep spiritual affirmation, strong and delicate artistic perceptions, detailed chronicling of human poverty, depletion, dignity. Read it. You'll find imperfections, unevenness, occasional gratuitous slaps at established powers; you'll also find as rich a talent and independent a mind as is functioning in American literature today. [Spring 1942]

✿ The Mind of the Ministry

In early America, his congregation accepted the circuit-rider as a person of great importance, taking it on faith that he knew more than they did about heaven since it was obvious that he knew more than they did about the earth. However fragmentary, distorted or false this mundane 'knowledge' might be, so long as the preacher's account was the only available one, it was eagerly listened to by lonely folks. And, in the giving of such worldly food to those who hungered after it, the preacher acquired a prestige that made valid in their eyes his claim of knowing the 'word of God' for which they hungered too.

After a time, the people were brought closer together through travel, towns, schools, newspapers, books, radio, and lost some of their loneliness. Information concerning the world they lived in was easily acquired on week days now by those who wanted it. Perhaps this coming closer together added little wisdom to men's hearts but it made facts a cheap commodity within the reach of any hand. Many in the preacher's congregation now knew more than he knew about the earth we live on. They had opened doors into science, art, politics, sociology, economics, literature, psychiatry and felt at home there. And many, being experts, were quite frankly no longer willing to accept an amateur's pronouncements on these subjects as Ultimate Truth.

Curiously enough, although the preacher's knowledge failed to keep pace with his congregation's, his concept of himself as their 'leader' remained unchanged. With the complacency of 'good' people in and out of the pulpit, he assumed that prestige (once his by default) was now his God-given right and not a thing to be earned, or lost, in the open market. Instead of using science to increase his capacity to understand this world and to meet the needs of the people who live in it, he denounced science and labeled some of these needs immoral, or else needs that can never be met in this world. When his congregation began drifting

away through boredom, instead of berating himself for his ignorance, he berated them for their sinfulness. Instead of weighing the relative merits of his morning's sermon and a game of golf, it was easier on his image of himself to label his sermon "God's work" and golf the "work of the devil."

This complacent assumption that whatever he says is by definition important and right is a strange and fascinating spectacle for unbelieving eyes to watch. And to those in his congregation unawed by authoritarianism this absurd claim of omniscience works as a boomerang, alienating them from him or breeding in them that more deadly attitude of cynical tolerance of what, in their eyes, has become completely unimportant.

An equally great damage results when his hearers take him at his own valuation, turning to him for emotional guidance through personal and family difficulties. Some know, some have learned in sorrow, that it is as disastrously stupid to assume that God puts into a minister's mouth what words to say about sick emotions as to assume that God puts into a surgeon's hands what to do for sick bodies. True, Jesus himself has pointed the way by his recognition of the supreme value of love in human personality and human relationships, and a minister who sincerely accepts his teachings (rather than the Old Testament emphasis on a God of vengeance) will have his face set in the right direction. But today we demand more of a physician than the belief that life is preferable to death, health more desirable than disease. We demand that the physician supplement his intuitions with acquisition of the scientific knowledge, skills, techniques which human wisdom and ingenuity have amassed. We demand of even our family physician (whose task is analogous to that of our pastor) that he know his way about in the medical world sufficiently to avoid giving harmful treatment and to call in a specialist when his own knowledge is insufficient for our physical needs.

The time has come when those who minister to the human soul must also move on to another level than witch-doctory.

Who They Are And What They Want

In trying to understand the church's and its ministers' cultural lag, it would be profitable to analyze the kinds of people drawn into the ministry and what they seek there:

We know that some go because it seems the best and most obvious way to be useful to society. They feel deeply, as do many other sensitive, imaginative people, the troubles of the world and the sorrows of men. They are aware that society with all its imperfections gives much to each child—rich and poor—born into it, and they want to give a few presents back to society. Whatever the soil its roots are nourished in, this compassion is real and valid and such men are genuinely concerned with easing the burdens of mankind and giving insight into men's needs.

There are others who go because of family traditions and family pressures. Since Old Testament days, families have "given their sons to God." This gift is often a curious blend of motives: acts of penance tangled up with church politics and the way of power; old forgotten fantasies and guilt feelings glazed over by desire for community leadership and civic respectability. It would be interesting to us to probe, but no more so perhaps than why men choose the medical profession, or why men marry their wives.

More pertinent would be a study of those who enter the ministry because "God calls them." The skeptical observer naturally interprets this as meaning that they go because their own emotional needs propel them there. Some, to find shelter from a world they do not feel equipped to cope with. At their best, these are gentle and kind, but ineffectual, lacking the intellectual and emotional stamina to grapple with major problems in or out of the church. At their worst, they are infantile, flabby-souled, cowardly dead-weights attaching themselves to God's coat-tails. They want security, and will pay, and require the church to pay also, the high price it costs. Others go seeking balm for bruised egos, hungering to be "first" but lacking the personality traits and skills which win priorities by worldly standards; finding instead a place where obeisance from men may be had by making obeisance to God.

More fascinating are those who require the pulpit (indeed, the whole magnificent backdrop of heaven and hell their predecessors have woven) as stage-set on which to project the drama of the conflict taking place in their own hearts. This inner turmoil of fear, frustration, hate, love, guilt seems to him who is its prey too gigantic to be appropriately housed in six feet of clay.

So, moved partly by the drama of the universe, partly by the megalomania of his own ego, he personifies the forces contending within him, blowing them up to a size commensurate with his own feelings about them, and calls the world to witness the struggle between God and the Devil for his own now satisfyingly important immortal soul. Something—the artist and the egoist—in each of us responds to this drama even in its crudest presentations. Yet we know the harmful effects these men can have upon immature, impressionable listeners: the nights of terror endured by children whose status in the family makes them more readily feel that they are slated for Eternal Damnation than for Eternal Bliss; the shadow thrown across the emotional lives of those who, before their personalities have developed to the point of coping with it, experience the trauma of 'Conviction of Sin'; the life-long resistance to scientific knowledge and self-understanding engendered in those whose unformed minds yield to his hypnotic eloquence and accept his poetic drama as literal fact.

There has been quite a bit of talk in recent years among semi-sophisticates about preachers and sex. In most of this talk the hidden germ of truth is crudely apprehended and grossly misrepresented—as, for example, in Caldwell's *Journeyman*. One can concede to the general principle that when sex is barred from the door, it is well to look to the windows, even stained-glass windows. But it is only when the word sex is defined to include the whole gamut of diffuse interpersonal relationships ordinarily covered by such words as friendship, esteem, hero-worship, psychic interdependence, that one can find anything sexual in the tie that binds most ministers to their congregation. There is nothing unique or wrong in the fact that a person gives and receives emotional satisfactions from his relationships with others; or in the fact that people who inhibit their capacity for direct sexual pleasures (some preachers and some members of their congregations fall within this group, others do not) tend to seek compensatory satisfactions in their more diffuse and sublimated associations. Civilization itself is in part founded on these principles, and distortion results from singling out the ministry for special vivisection.

Father and Child

There are, however, two aspects of the emotional relationship between a minister and his congregation that invite question and thought. First, the relationship is on a regressive level, being that of father-child instead of adult-adult. The minister, as their father-substitute, receives from his congregation the benefits this relation implies: he is looked up to, by those who take him at face-value, as the supreme human arbiter of their spiritual destiny; he knows power and the elation and complacency power brings. Yet he is not subject to the usual checks and counter-checks that in today's world customarily restrain, mature or oust other wielders of power. This relation is further complicated by the fact that the minister, feeling himself a child in relation to God, tends to avoid certain inner experiences and attitudes without which no one can grow into full emotional maturity. So long as one acts in certain ways, cherishes certain ideals of conduct, *because God commands him to do so, because he fears God's punishment*, so long as there fails to come about an introjection of these values, an acceptance of full responsibility for choice of goals, for selection of methods of attaining them, and accountability for failure to achieve them, full psychic maturity is impossible. Our generation has no greater need perhaps than for more and more of us to incorporate into our own personalities those ideals and concepts from our religious and cultural past that are valid for us today. Only in this way can the wisdom of other ages be reactivated into a vital, fluid, dynamic force which meets the needs of people in our world today. The *right* we do, because God will punish us if we fail to do it or because Jesus wants us to do it, is good only as a child is "good" when it does what is right either to avoid punishment or to please its family. It comes to have meaning in terms of our own psychic growth or our emotional maturity only when we do it because we cannot live with ourselves unless we do it. It begins to fructify in terms of an enriched culture only when we learn that results are as important as motives; that a 'sin' is not a private deal between ourselves and God, to be wiped out by repentance and forgiveness, but the impoverishing and crippling of other men's lives which can

be compensated for only in so far as our wiser acts bring them new wealth and new areas of growth. We need to ask ourselves whether the good that accrues to thinking of oneself as a child of God (the humility that is implicit in this concept, the balm it can bring our bruised spirits) outweighs the limitations it imposes on our own emotional and intellectual growth, the blindness it sometimes permits us to have in regard to the consequences to other human beings of our acts—and failures to act. In the present immature state of our culture—and perhaps for many generations to come—it may be necessary for most people that a transitional state be gone through which will permit them to obtain from their religious life many of the psychic comforts which it can give, without permitting it to hold them back from a realistic facing and solving of the problems which must be worked out by human beings on this earth.

It may be that these last named characteristics of the mind of the ministry are not surface traits, but are rooted in its core. It may be that the organized church now considers and will continue to consider that its major province is the relationship of man to God. It may be that by "God" it means and will continue to mean a Superman up in heaven about whom we know only what the Bible tells us, and about whom we must believe all that the Bible tells us. It may be that the church has no place in it for those who believe that the primary function of religion is to raise the level of men's relations with other men. It may be that a place outside the church must be found for those so theologically unorthodox as to interpret "God" to mean the poetic projection of human needs and human hopes—a projection that has no external validity, but becomes real to men as they progressively incorporate into their own lives those virtues they once attributed to him. If so, then the main service we can expect of the church is that it act as weaning station, pushing away those who have matured sufficiently to find their spiritual nourishment in their own hearts and the hearts of their fellow-men; offering succor, in its pulpits and its pews, to those who require a supernatural being to take over those functions their earthly parents once seemed to perform.

It may well be also that the church—in so far as it is failing to give the world that inspired, informed, courageous leadership

which many of us believe it is basically and uniquely qualified to give—is failing because of the prevalence in it of men with the mind-sets we have been discussing.

There Are Others

But we cannot forget that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of ministers—some in high places, some in low—who have chosen their work, not for the psychic security it offers but for the opportunity and challenge it gives; who are not blocked off by the maze of its theology, the hierarchy of its organization, from coming to terms with its basic content: Christ's intuitions regarding the sanctity of personality and the supreme value of creative love. In another part of this issue of *South Today*, some of these vigorous, hope-inspiring church leaders have expressed their faith unequivocally and have told us something of their work in leading men to richer, more abundant life on this earth.

We, who recognize the hold the church has kept on men's hearts through the centuries and the richness that has accrued to it because of the millions who have centered their faith, their hopes, their dreams, their hungers in it, feel that it would be our civilization's tragic and incalculable loss if the church should forfeit its hold on men's allegiance today. We have dwelt, in this article, upon that part of the mind of the ministry which seems to us to have deviated from the mind of Christ. There are other minds in the ministry who have held fast to their faith and its implications. The church makes martyrs of some of these men, present-day saints of others. Both are its life blood. There are still others—and they are the saddest people in America today: the theologically 'sound' ministers who believe sincerely and literally in the fatherhood of God, and who have the simple integrity to know that this belief is meaningless save as it is followed through by daily practice of the brotherhood of man; but who do not have the courage to speak and live this brotherhood in words and acts so concrete as to risk offending their congregations.

More Abundant Life

The task of bringing the knowledge available in the world today into the service of humanity is as difficult as it is pressing.

We do not know what part of this job can best be done by those working outside the church, what part by those working in it. The severest critic of the ministry cannot but feel sympathetic in view of the gigantic demands that must be made upon it if the church is to fill what seems to some its only tenable role in the present day world. Yet if society is to mature, some element in it must perform many of those tasks which the church now pre-empts without fulfilling or recognizing the full import of. And if the church is to have a place of importance in society, it cannot by-pass these obligations.

This much we know: the challenge of the times cannot be met by a schizoid withdrawal from or denial of the complexities of the life about us; nor can it be met by the paranoid assumption that being ordained into the ministry automatically equips one to cope with these complexities. Some of us in and out of the church have faith that this challenge will be met when the spirit of out-going love which Christ exemplified (and which the church has cherished in its ideals even while repudiating it in its acts) has been implemented by all the knowledge human beings have accumulated about themselves and the world they live in; and when this spirit and this knowledge have together integrated men's personalities and freed them for courageous thinking and creative living. [Winter 1944-45]

III

Works by Lillian Smith
and Paula Snelling





✻ From Lack of Understanding

[An Editorial]

Here and there throughout the South are men and women with the emotional detachment necessary to search into and grasp the complex origins of our present regional dilemmas: sociologists in many of our universities, the brilliant group at Chapel Hill, the Commission on Inter-Racial Cooperation, the Southern Regional Committee of the Social Science Research Council, the sugar-coated but nonetheless worthy efforts of the Student Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., and Volunteer Movement, liberal journalists, a few thoughtful lookers-on. But with these notable exceptions it is not unfair to say that we Southerners wallow in our feelings of inferiority, defeatism, like the old Biblical dog returning to its vomit. W. J. Cash has some interesting explanations of this state of mind in his forthcoming book *The Mind of the South* which, if the excellent chapters we have read in manuscript are fair samplings, should be a best seller among literate people, and following in the wake of *Gone With the Wind* may act as an astringent to our self-pity.

But in addition to this need for understanding our state of mind—and of course the very phrase “The South” is a state of mind—we need detailed and comprehensive facts concerning our immediate, multiple-faceted and paradoxical dilemma interpreted against historical backgrounds. And this Howard W. Odum gives us in an admirable way in *Southern Regions of the United States* (to be reviewed in our next issue)—a full-size picture of our potentialities and our deficiencies, buttressed up by 700 indices and 600 maps and charts.

We who, with vague intuitions reinforced by little actual knowledge or time-perspective, have called “complicated” the knot which our Yankee missionaries from the time of the abolitionists to the *Nation's* youngest squirts have tried to cut with their facile scissors, can see it now in many of its paradoxical convolutions by sampling almost any page of this book: the

Southeastern Region, one of the two richest regions in the world in natural resources, contains (with the Southwestern Region) half the eroded land of the U. S., spends more money on fertilizer than any other section of the U. S. (more than it does on public schools), has 212 submarginal counties which comprise almost one-third of its total land, and is now facing with its cotton crop economy a crisis which extends from its poorest submarginal folk to its wealthiest cotton broker. . . . Is in lowest quartile of the nation's taxable incomes (but has a fifth of the nation's railroads and a higher percentage of track than U. S. average while its highways are up to the average)—saddled with a dichotomous form of education with more Negro children and youth to be educated than there are white children in the Northwest region, or Far West, or New England or Middle West while the tax income from Negro wealth is negligible; with more children (Negro and white) to be educated than any other region of U. S., with fewer public libraries, higher illiteracy, but more high school graduates than in all U. S. in 1900, spending less money on schools than any other region of U. S. but even so spending more than entire United States spent on schools in 1900 . . . spending a greater percentage of its total income for higher education than any other region but possessing not one university of the first rank while 9 of the 11 states comprising the Southeastern region have no universities rated by the American Council on Education as capable of giving the Ph.D. degree and no Southern university rated competent to give this degree in civil, chemical, mechanical, electrical or mining engineering or in bacteriology, entomology, geography, plant pathology, plant physiology, social science, yet possessing one third of the women's colleges in the entire U. S., none of which rates in standards with the upper group of U. S. women's colleges . . . with more churches, more church members proportionately than any other region of the U. S., also more homicides, more lynchings, more crime . . .

But a mere dipping in and bringing up of handfuls of Ripley-esque facts with their curious appeal to our simian itch to be startled is neither fair to the book nor useful to us. The book needs to be read carefully and by many Southerners. Unfortunately, by virtue of what it purports to do, it can hold no popular appeal. Mr. Odum suggests that its findings should be put in a more popular

book written to present the case for *The Promise of the South: A Test of American Regionalism* and we hope that this will soon be done. But this volume, we (being tetched with a mite of the home-missionary spirit) would like to see in the office of every county administrator throughout the Southeastern region, in every newspaper office (it could be the source of a text for at least one editorial a week), in every banker's office, in every high school library. For we Southerners need above all else knowledge of the historical origins of our present difficulties and an understanding, as Mr. Odum says so frequently throughout the book, "of the immensity and time quality of cultural reconstruction and the exceedingly complex nature of the regional culture involved" in order to "focus upon a relatively small number of elemental factors toward which practical study and planning may be directed." [Fall 1936]

✿ As We Go to War

[An Editorial]

This magazine had gone to press before war was declared. Today as we read its proof, we find it difficult to keep our mind on commas and semi-colons, our eyes on misspelled words, at a moment when death is laying its familiar hands on young American shoulders, stabbing our mistakes to their hearts. We share with other Americans a profound sorrow that our nation and other nations have once more failed to settle their economic conflicts by rational means. We dread, as does every thoughtful American with us, the hard years ahead of our people, the bloodshed, the grief, the psychic disintegration, the moral regression that war inevitably brings, the democratic losses which may not be inevitable yet have always in the past come in its wake.

For those who cherish their country and its people, who deeply prize its democratic institutions, who hold human values to be transcendent over imperialistic power, this is a time of sadness.

It is not irrelevant to ask, even at this early and confused hour, what specifically are we fighting for and what kind of peace do we want?

It is profoundly patriotic to ask ourselves how with the least loss of life, the minimum loss of democratic values, these aims, if acceptable to American people, can be realized, now that the country is at war.

It is urgently needful for emotionally mature and intelligent men and women of good will to stem the tide of chauvinism, to enunciate civil rights, to define moral and creative values and acts at a time when regressive violence makes such values and acts seem to lose authenticity.

It is sanely scrupulous for those of us who believe the future of children to be not ours but a legacy held in trust, to passionately insist that none of it be spent on our present, that no pressures persuade us to draw upon their psychic and moral resources for ammunition of hate and revenge to be used against the enemy,

or to require of them a single destructive act. Let us declare that we adults must fight our own war, pay the price of our own mistakes, that no danger is so great, no end so needful that a Children's Crusade is justified to gain it.

It is above all obligatory that we who deeply believe in peaceful and rational settlement of conflict, who deny that violence is a moral act, to realize that as war, however immediately justified by the 'moral code' of nations, can not bring democracy or enduring peace to a people, neither can talk and acts of pacifism alone, necessary as they are, bring peace to this earth. Only knowledge and understanding of the underlying economic conflicts, the racial stress, the frustrations of individual men, the mystical power-lust of groups and nations, added to a passionate desire for peace can weld and sharpen both those democratic means and the will to use them by which conflicts and strains and hungers can be removed. Only then can the way be prepared by unremitting vigilance through peace years and war years for a civilized and harmonious cooperation between nations and between groups within nations. [Winter 1941]

✿ Man Born of Woman

Today, with the detonation of man destroying man pounding our hearts, it is not easy to clear our minds of panic; nor easy to see the human spirit in tragic bondage to its past without being betrayed by so plain a view into despair. Yet never has a time so required of us that we keep our minds clear and our hearts quiet, as does today. For we are in deep trouble and all that we cherish is endangered. Knowing this, we must take care that we do not lose that which is most precious to us and our children.

The time has come to decide what this is, and, having once made our choice, to find ways of holding to it. And so it is that thoughtful men and women are turning away from the noise and uproar of slogans and talk of killing and being killed as solution to ills, and are searching their hearts and their minds, leafing their oldest memories as they turn the pages of history, trying to find why mankind forever seeks with evil means to bring about good and forever fails in the seeking.

We ask ourselves questions, not expecting to find easy answers, but seeking direction in our thinking. *Do men come together in order that they may more abundantly create, or more effectively destroy? For what they can give each other, or for what they can help each other take from outsiders? When men combine to kill other men, do they do so as a means to an end or as end in itself? If war was once necessary as a method for getting food and security, is it still unavoidable for the same reason? If the avowed purposes which mass-murder subserves can be attained by other processes, are we willing to relinquish it or do we crave it for its own sake? If it is dear to us even when it does not bring us material gains, or when other technics are available by which those same gains can be had, is it yet possible for us to renounce it? If we are unwilling or unable to do so, what alternative awaits us?*

Each chapter of history, from earliest to latest page, shows man hunting in packs to kill his kind. One may seek the genesis of this trait in speculations concerning prehistoric brothers, ban-

ished by a jealous father, banding together to depose the tyrant and put a bloody end to his monopoly of female society, or may content oneself with punier, more orthodox hypotheses. But the fact remains indisputable; and points us to the necessity of inquiring—though only briefly here—into the functions of groups and the economics on which their stability depends as we search for rational ways of meeting the world's urgent needs.

In earlier days there was no great dichotomy between the individual and his group: they were impelled by the same motives, they sought the same goals, they stood to profit by the same success. But gradually through centuries, their paths have diverged. The individual, with missteps and fumbings, has repressed some of those infantile and savage desires which once were the mainsprings of his actions. He has come really to want many of the civilized and humane things which at first he only thought he ought to want, and later wished he wanted; but now he actually wants them, and to limited but perceptible degree, has attained them. Meanwhile the 'group'—in the beginning an instrument by which the individual got what he wanted when not strong enough alone to get it—has come to have varied and complex functions, some of which now imperil its members.

Though force was once necessary in order to wrest a living from the earth and its creatures, we have at last created potentialities for producing and distributing goods sufficient for the world's needs so that today it would seem that, at rational levels, only avarice and inertia require man to resort to the inflicting of death in order to obtain materials of living. And at the same time that these pressures have let up so that they no longer necessitate war, other internal and external conditions have arisen which make continued resort to it suicidal. And with tools perfected to the point where man can wipe himself off the map any day he chooses, knowledge that he may do so burdens humanity with deep anxiety.

Could we but view our peril sanely and utilize our resources for averting it, there would be less need for panic. For the psychologists and social scientists have been as busy during recent decades as have inventors of machines. True—so long as we do not act constructively on it, the knowledge they bring us of the submerged, unflattering psychic motivations which propel us to

war, of the scope and needlessness of human misery, of the inadequacy and insanity of mass-murder as solution for social ills only adds to our nervous tension. But this knowledge, in the hands of those having more fundamental allegiance to life than to death, to truth than to hypocrisy, to justice than to greed, could transform the world.

Through the generations there have been men who have striven valiantly toward this end but they have been too few for the magnitude of the task. And woman, taking herself at man's valuation, has kept hands off. (Which may or may not have been justifiable in the days when his capacity to kill was only a fraction of her capacity to reproduce. But the ratio is rapidly reversing itself and she can no longer afford indifference to this male group-trait which threatens the race.)

In seeking reasons why man in his group activities responds with warmth to mastery of the tools for destruction and coolness to utilization of the machinery for social betterment, we must bear in mind that the scales are weighted to that end. For the individual's constructive impulses are each free to find full immediate outlet in small solitary acts; whereas his destructive impulses are so far as possible held in check—dammed up to form a reservoir of cumulative power which the individual alone dares not take responsibility for letting loose. With the result that, when the group-conscience at intervals sanctions concerted outlet for it, each individual is propelled into the channel with a force many times greater than is at any moment accumulated within him for creative deeds. Another reason why destructive acts come easier to the group than do constructive acts is that formerly concerted aggression was necessary: men were so many and available, goods so few, that only those who banded themselves together in the most effectively destructive group lived to propagate their talents. And their sons who through countless generations found group violence indispensable for survival are loath now to relinquish it even though under the changed circumstances of today it holds as great threat to its users as to their adversaries. For man (who created not life, but the intricate machinery of civilization and the devious patterns by which it is maintained) cherishes *his* creation in all its manifestations and is as loath to destroy even its most hideous malformations as

woman is to destroy an imbecile child to whom she has given birth. This tenacious conservatism becomes another obstacle to rational progression toward peace. As does the fact, which we tend to discount, that from ancient times war has been a psychic release for those cultural renunciations of cannibalism and murder which society early required of its individuals. Making these demands when its own existence was imperilled by their continuance, it succeeded in imposing upon individuals these sacrifices only by inaugurating ceremonials in which the group periodically performed as rites those very acts prohibited its members separately, and by giving value received in some form of emotional satisfaction not otherwise available to them, thus deeply entrenching war among peoples not only for the direct emotional and material satisfactions it gives but because it was the plausible surrogate, the public festival, the orgy by which the group recompensed its members for day by day denials of their impulses. A more obvious hindrance in modern times to peaceful settlement of difficulties is the individual's hunger for power and his efforts to satisfy it by identifications with powerful groups—a phenomenon we are having to consider increasingly in a mechanized culture where individuals function more and more as cogs.

But in discussions of war, the bitter and ancient dilemma of 'man born of woman,' its sharpening of his hunger for power, its intensifying of his stubborn holding to old patterns, is too little dwelt upon. In war as in peace, in civilization's destruction as in its creation, *cherchez la femme* is of eternal relevance. Man's humiliation at her hand has been monstrous and her tyranny a dread thing to endure. It has been sensible of him that he learned long ago to turn his hate and fear of her, equalling his injury but rarely cancelling out his love, against the first distant object concerning which he could make a grudge; and it is only natural that he now cling to this archaic pack-hunting habit to escape her!

(Perhaps it is not too trivial to note here that woman with her sharp, unmoral tongue has never invented vituperatives against the male to equal his abusive words having her for target;—a mere *hellion-bitch-whore* heating the mind with their connotations. Nor to recall that man in anger tells off man, not by direct, searing blasts of profanity but by reminding him in bitter cir-

cuitousness that he is the son of this, that, the other cursed female. Such fury and hate so philologically cast in woman's image is not wisely ignored by those who search the past for the whys of our world-wide trouble and the future for its solution. One smiles in the saying of it. Yet something in each man and woman acknowledges its truth.)

If man dared to thrust into the open his unending secret enmity against woman, there might be less of nation warring with nation; less need for him to merge his longing for superiority into a great mass-lust for power, less need for him to find outlet for his hate—drives which so complicate the more simple and rational needs of peoples. Pressures of population, of trade, of control of basic resources, now so compelling would recede in size and strength to the point where he might conceivably deal rationally with them. For in a world where there is abundance for all, these are practical matters requiring only that special intelligence and skill in organizing production and devising distribution with which man is so highly endowed. How different might be the problems which confront us with such hideous stubbornness today had not man been forced to find diversion from his ancient and bitter duel with woman by projecting his hostility and jealousy of her upon antagonists with whom he has a reasonable chance of victory!

And yet how could he have done otherwise? For the only overt group act of aggression (though sabotage never ceases) which he can commit against her—who, calling forth his hate as mother-sister-wife-daughter is yet because of these tender relationships inviolate to his or his clan's attack—is to smother her firmly with the sacerdotal robes of 'sacred womanhood', and push her with gentle but exceedingly determined hand out of his man's world and back into place on her pedestal—segregating her as he does all groups without organized power, who threaten his supremacy in this his self-made civilization. Segregating her, putting her always and forever in her 'place' . . . Man the victor each day she invades his civilization; man the vanquished each night he returns to the home, where he was born, where he learned all that he knows of tenderness and security and life, and yet where he tries so desperately—not to die. As if for her, who has borne

him, suckled him, diapered him, to shroud him is more than his strained dignity can bear . . .

To get at the genesis of the ancient trouble between man and his woman we tell a fable, though it is a little wryly that we once more remind him of his humble beginnings:

In her body woman carried man for nine months. For nine months he was dependent upon her and secure and satisfied in his dependence with a completeness so near perfection in a world of desolating imperfections that out of this blissful experience must have sprung all his later dreams of a Utopian world . . . and his insatiable hunger for that nearest approximation to this early state he is ever likely to attain: death.

And though a time came when he was thrust out into a world not so warm, not so comfortable, yet for a while he was with reassuring frequency granted respites,—ecstatic reunions with her from whom he had been so abruptly parted. Suckling her breast, filling his body with her strength, gave him confirmation of his old dream—and perhaps the first desire to destroy the source of this dream . . .

But going on: a time comes when there are no more of these moments. He is admonished to be a little man; to be big and strong 'like your father.' And he looks up at father and sees in magnificently enlarged proportions someone who resembles too much—himself. And though he trembles with awe and gazes in vague admiration at this god (or devil) responding to stark power of size, seeing in these heroic dimensions his own future self, he remains yet doubtful for he also remembers with somatic urgency that once he was very small, and to be so small was good—as nothing in life since has ever been good.

The little boy continues to grow . . . hungering at times to attain the giant size of this hero the woman has urged him to become. She admires bigness. She too seems so awed by the magnificent physical power of 'father' that she lets her own body grow humble and complaisant and makes of it a willing goal for father's exploring energies. She *lets* father—

Ah . . . if the little boy had never perceived this! For in realizing this he guesses the woman's terrible strength and grows afraid. For he sees that in cunning she adorns herself with weak-

ness. He sees, yet cannot believe his own eyes, that she adds stature to her victim by the simple act of looking high above his head, until, following her eyes, he towers above her in satisfying superiority. Then, as if absent-mindedly, she pulls his head gently into her lap, smooths his curls, gathers them suddenly into her sure fingers and snips them off,—reducing her victim to his old role of small boy. But when man's humiliation has grown unbearable, her eyes once more wander skyward, and following her gaze he is again looking down upon her . . . and now feeling his strength he strides forth to confirm it, he goes out to conquer all the evil worlds that ever there have been, and in the going, he attains great and awesome height; but to her eyes, as she waves him on his valiant path, he still casts only a small boy's shadow behind him, and it is well that he does not turn back to see . . .

After a time the little boy too is grown. And he goes about among women, trying his strength with them, loving and fearing the mother in every creature he meets . . . and his hate grows as he recognizes in each of them the old cunning weakness of her, the earth's strong creature. But in desperation he takes one of them to mate,—having no other choice.

And after a vague time his woman brings forth a child. *How did you do that?* he demands. *I don't know*, she says, bewildered by such a question. *But you must know!* he cries in sudden male envy, *you must! How could you have done it if you don't know?* And woman stares at her mate a moment, then thrusts the baby into his arms. *But it is here*, she whispers, *that's all that matters, dear, isn't it, it's here!* And he jealously looking down at his woman's handiwork, gulps doggedly, *You ought to know how you did it. You ought to know! It's the only thing*, he mutters brokenly, *that does matter—the way it was done. You're just a woman*, he adds in loud sudden scorn, *that's what! Nobody but a woman could think a little red-faced squirming result as important as the way!* And he bangs the door in her puzzled face, strides out into the woods and squatting there on a rock in utter loneliness he lets his heart fill with misery. But after a while, he feels something slowly stir in his mind, and lo, it begins to grow, and his mind stretches full with it until its growth is complete

... and now in great excitement he takes *his* creation to the house, he calls her, *See*, he shouts proudly, *see what I've done!* But woman cannot see. *You must see*, he cries angrily, *it's here before your eyes! You've got to see; It has a name*, he whispers, *Logic I call it*, and flushed with pride. *Oh that!* woman says and hurries back to the baby. *Did you think that something real, dear? That's just a way, not always the best way either, real things are made, sometimes.*

Time passes. Man goes about his living. And each time his woman grows big with child he turns morose, confronted thus baldly with his ineptitude. And when it comes forth he in great shame observes that she with simple ease offers it nourishment which he with all his prowess and daring could not give.

But little by little, with logic's bright eyes to help (whom loyally he never abandons) the puzzle is pieced together until the Way grows brilliantly clear and he is filled with arrogant triumph and importance, knowing now that woman with all her assurance is as nothing without him. Then one day he hears a crackle in the woods, sees a shadow go past . . . and ugly suspicion clouds his certainty. And when next she calls him to come see what she has to show him, he stands before her moodily, suddenly asking with abrupt sharpness if it is his own. *Of course dear!* she murmurs. *How silly!* she muses, and smiles as she draws him down to her breast, *who else's could it be?*

The fable has no end . . . But one cons it, wondering in profound seriousness if some melioration of the discord between man and woman is not prerequisite to enduring peace between nations. It was this ancient warfare between the sexes that drove man, self-exiled from a simple home, into housing himself with a fantastically complex civilization,—a civilization whose brilliance and versatility critics of our modern age sometimes do not give sufficient credit to. Yet his great skill in organizing complex groups and institutions, his almost fantastic talent for getting things done if he wants them done, make it even more difficult, if one considers rational causes only, to understand his utter failure to erect the machinery for internationalism and peace. And if woman's protestations of hating war and loving peace are sincere, then surely the time has come on this unhappy earth

for her to seek out and face if she can the deep-lying forces which impel man on his road to destruction of the civilization he has so proudly erected.

Looking about, we find her past aloofness from civilization, though it may have contributed heavily to its threatened fall, also fits her peculiarly for its saving. Through heritage and generations of habit she differs in pertinent respects from men. Her sins—and they are many—she has committed singly, not in herds. Her acts both good and evil have taken place because she, or someone she personally loved or hated, wanted or did not want them to take place, not in the service of an abstraction or under group-hypnosis. The compulsion to be one of the crowd is not an integral part of female psychology. (When women appear similarly garbed on Easter and other mornings, it is not with that intent, but because they are equally handicapped and equally ingenious in carrying through the urge to be better dressed than the others.) It requires no great psychic effort for them to resist the magnetic pull of the group, for they have never been under its domain. Women do not have the age-old undertow of group loyalty to combat which would impel them to stand together right or wrong, and to rationalize their acts; nor have they as much thirst to merge themselves with the group in sensuous enjoyment of its pervasive erotic attraction (both of which male characteristics may have their origin in those banished-brothers days). And if it be true that women hate no less than men, are impelled no less than they to destroy, are no more inclined to turn their destructive impulses inward, still they would be less likely to choose war as a solution; for they are less given to symbolism, less likely to be satisfied with killing the wrong person.

But there are reasons for thinking that woman does not share equally man's affinity for death. If it be true, as some philosophers assert, that death is an integral part of life, not something superimposed upon it (if organic matter carries with it, inextricably, the seeds of its own destruction) it is probably also true that among the polarities of the universe, masculinity and death, femaleness and life, are linked together. And by simple mathematics, qualitative differences to one side, the sex which has to spend nine months in the begetting of each human being would

have less time to devote to the service of death, were it equally inclined, than has the sex of whom nine minutes are required. Add to that the thirty years during which by custom woman is harnessed to the cradle, caught in the treadmill of the home, and one sees that, whatever her impulses, she could not have made of herself the effective bondservant of death which man has become.

While through the generations woman has borne, nurtured, and conditioned for better and for worse the raw material of humanity, she has contributed little else toward civilization. The group life of the race has been, directly, a creation of man. Whether through the fortuitousness of circumstances or because of inherent differences between the sexes, the evils which characterize mass activities are perhaps too deeply inbred now in the male for him alone to save the race from their accelerating effects. Although it is doubtful that civilization could have come into being without the concomitant of violence, the callousness to life, the sacrifice of tree to forest which man in his allegiance to abstraction has incorporated into his soul, it is equally doubtful that civilization in its present state can endure, and preserve its beneficent qualities, without a more drastic curbing and uprooting of those same tendencies than man alone can inaugurate and carry through. And woman, who thus far has been permitted to enjoy parasitically the benefits of civilization, will perish with her host unless she can aid him in liberating himself from his seductor death.

But her task will be three-fold and difficult. And remembering her past, one is none too confident of her success, notwithstanding her special qualifications.

For ten thousand years civilized woman's major job has been that of mother. As a brooder she has done her work honorably—measuring up well to the efficient gestation standards of female animals. But as a mother of human children she has learned little during the centuries. She has not acquired, nor made effort to acquire, even moderate skill in guiding her child up the steep stairs of those emotional attachments along which he must pass on his way to psychic maturity, but instead with compulsive repetitiousness she attempts again and again to tie the severed umbilical cord to herself, holding him desperately to his infan-

tilism. Indifferent or blind to frustrations piling higher and higher in his heart as he moves from year to year of his life, she implacably urges the little savage to make those rigorous cultural renunciations which our civilization requires of everyone entering it and yet gives no heed to how he shall be recompensed for his painful sacrifices.

It is an indictment of woman in her role of mother that millions upon millions of her sons today turn to war and violence as the "way out" of their deep trouble, some eager to give vent to those destructive feelings which she has cultivated assiduously through her blindness and stupidity and narcissistic urges; others, hating violence but perplexed by desires too ambivalent for rational choice, reluctantly following the old familiar way of bloodshed . . .

It is an indictment of her that it was left to man to discover all the knowledge that we have of childhood. For not only has she failed in her role of mother but she has used it as an excuse for her empty mind. She has taken pride in her obscurantism. Despite her great talent for plumbing her man's heart, she understands little of her own; despite her ability to look at the world realistically without the blinders of man's romanticism, she does not value the knowledge she thus gains and makes no effort to acquire more by a discipline of her mind. In her primary job of child-rearing she has relied, not upon knowledge but with narcissistic complacency she has preferred to believe that *her* child's nine months' intra-uterine existence guaranteed its future welfare. With primitive, dumb assurance she has for ten thousand years believed, despite glaring evidence to the contrary, that because her body somehow brought the little germ cell to fruition, she with no further intellectual effort understands the complexities of the civilization for which she prepares her child, comprehends the intricate and subtle processes of his infantile emotional development, and is divinely equipped to nurture and guide him as is no other. It is no wonder that a great man like Sigmund Freud, who taught the world almost all it knows about the child's emotions, spoke of woman a little contemptuously as 'culturally stunted.'

We can hardly forget these things when we urge woman to go forth as saviour of a weary, sinning race of men. We grow uncertain remembering her regressive mind-set, remembering the

narrow circumference of her love and her loyalty as we face an unknown future which seems to be leading toward a form of internationalism, to be shaping itself blindly and awkwardly but inevitably into a democratic world order for which not only new technics and new institutions will be needed but expanding imagination and loyalties which can encompass the whole of mankind as securely, as warmly as woman's body encloses the life of her son.

In extenuation of our sex's sins, we remember that we are an oppressed group, that man put our mind in prison. But we have grown to love our chains. We have learned to exploit, as do other minority groups, our 'weakness' (that poor lie which man so defensively labelled his woman with!). And yet, forsaking a direction which is leading us straight into a dead-end of despair, we now change direction (in that way so exasperating to the male) and say again that unless woman *does* make this tremendous effort, disaster can hardly be avoided for her children. Knowing the strength of her primitive, animal life instinct, somehow we believe, despite her sloth, that she will summon the will; to hold on tenaciously and once more give value to the living in a world where life is now held so cheap.

But her task will be difficult. In her home she must use the knowledge which psychoanalysis offers her to level her own and her family's mounting frustrations, to gain understanding of human needs and ways of fulfilling them, to find outlets in creative directions for destructive instincts, using hate as manure, to make green fields for living children—not cemeteries for dead sons. She must, in addition, learn again the ancient ways of the female, the subtle strengths of her sex—birthrights she has sold for the pottage of a specious 'equality' in man's world. Not that she must retire from his world (as Hitler and others suggest, perceiving, though crudely, some of man's basic trouble) but rather bring with her into it as substitutes for a competitor's tricks—the old wisdom and versatility which if understood by her and used with scruple would enable her to play with brilliant virtuosity the complex, modern role of mother-companion-lover. How chivalrously woman could acknowledge man's great achievements in the fabulous world he has made for himself, knowing it was she who drove him into it, out of the home. How graciously she

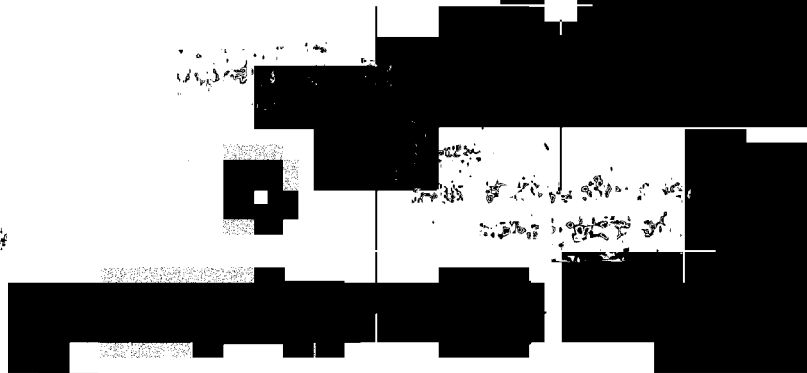
should insist upon no belittling of his proved superiority of mind and muscle, armed as she is by nature with such lethal weapons! Yet instead of the magnificent role that could be hers, instead of the comfort and security which she could with such bland tenderness give a world so sorely in need today, she cheaply and treacherously vacillates between the sinuous acts of Delilah and the parasitic ways of a child; she denies her own femaleness by assuming the less attractive aspect of the male; or else betrays man by bestowing the love that is rightfully his upon his sons . . . She must learn again the ancient lesson which will teach her that however swiftly the old way goes and the new way comes, man's dreams of himself will never change.

Less difficult surely yet demanding persistence and effort, she must learn to live as a civilized, humane, informed world-citizen, refusing (for her home has no wall around it that will protect it from aerial bombs) narrow provincialisms of thought and feeling, remembering that she has let her love through too many uncounted centuries carry her across the enemy's lines into his arms, for her now to deem insurmountable the historic and arbitrary boundaries of race, of nation, of class on a globe already shrunk so small by radio, and aeroplane and interlocking needs as to make anachronistic and suicidal all artificial barriers to human relations. [Winter 1941]

IV

Works by Other Contributors





‡ The Reign of the Commonplace¹

by W. J. Cash

The final great result of Reconstruction we have to consider in this chapter—a result which stands as a sort of summation of the things we have been seeing—is that it established what I have called the savage ideal as it had not been established in any Western people since the decay of medieval feudalism, set up the reign of the “commonplace” as fully as it is set up today in Fascist Italy, in Nazi Germany, even in Soviet Russia, and so completed the paralysis of Southern culture at the root.

Here, under pressure of what was felt to be a matter of life and death, was that old line between what was Southern and what was not, etched as it were, in fire, and carried through every department of life. Here were the ideas and loyalties of the apotheosized past fused into the tightest coherence, and endowed with all the binding emotional and intellectual power of any tribal complex of West Africa or the Belgian Congo. Here was that mighty frame, the Democratic Party, as potent an instrument of regimentation as any totemic society that ever existed. In a word, here, explicitly defined in every great essential, defined in feeling down to the last detail, was what one must think and say and do.

And one thought it, said it, did it, exactly as it was ordained, or one stood in pressing peril of being cast out for a damned nigger-loving scoundrel in league with the enemy. Let a man deviate from the straight way once, and by dint of long truckling and much eating of meek bread, he might yet win forgiveness. Let him deviate twice, three times, and men’s eyes were hard and dangerous in his, women began to gather their skirts closely about them as they passed, doors that had formerly swung hospitably open slammed in his face, marriage in a decent family became difficult or impossible, the kids in the village street howled and cast stones, the dogs developed an inexplicable eagerness to bite him, his creditors were likely to call the sheriff.

Had it been possible in the Old South to be an open atheist or

skeptic without suffering any physical penalty? Pious and patriotic drunks, riding home from a camp meeting or a party rally, were apt now to send bullets crashing through the unbelieving one's windows. And sooner or later, the Klan was almost certain to pause in its routine labors long enough to teach him reverence and a proper regard for the safety of his country with a horsewhip or a coat of tar.

Tolerance, in sum, was well-nigh extinguished all along the line, and conformity made a nearly universal law. Criticism? analysis? detachment? all those activities and attitudes so necessary to the healthy development of any civilization? Every one of them took on the aspect of high and aggravated treason. Nay, indeed, this is only half to state the fact. For the peculiar effect of the extraordinarily close identification of the individual with the idea of the South, and of the continually sharpening personal outlook, was this: that any questioning or doubting of the South in any respect (and in this atmosphere of boiling emotion, merely to stand aloof a little was *ipso facto* to be convicted of such questioning and doubting) was inevitably felt by each loyal Southerner as a questioning and doubting of his immediate ego. Which is to say that, being what he is, he inevitably felt it as a challenge to be resisted with all the enormous pugnacity at his disposal, as an affront to his person to be avenged with every means he could command, either alone or in collaboration with his neighbors.

Thus, these activities and attitudes, from having long been difficult and dangerous, became virtually impossible. That intensely personal blackguardism to which criticism had so largely been reduced in the Old South (that blackguardism which, having once been native to all America, was rapidly dying out elsewhere in these years) continued to exist, certainly, and not only continued to exist but flourished and waxed incontinently fat as a weapon against the Yankee, a healing balm for the Southern pride, a whip for the traitor, the rebel, the dissident, a power for conformity. But of rational casting of light into the fabric of the South itself, or standing apart and examining and evaluating it in any part, of candid confession of the fact that this society, like all others, was imperfect, of honest facing of the evils which abounded—of all this there was almost exactly nothing from the day South Carolina announced herself a sovereign power until

Walter Hines Page and George Washington Cable tried it in the middle 'eighties'—Page as editor of a weekly newspaper in North Carolina and Cable with the publication of his book, *The Silent South*. And despite the fact that both went about it gingerly and not without tenderness, the attempt brought down upon their heads such a flood of rage, such torrents of epithet and ascription of zoological parentage, such pointed suggestions as to what medicine ought to be meted out to them, that they abandoned it as hopeless to a dweller within the land itself and fled to Yankeedom, there to remain for the rest of their days.

Nor have we done yet. Reconstruction not only did all the things I have just set down, but in the same process, as we need to observe specifically, it also completed the South's old terrified truculence toward new ideas from the outside. Here, you see, were the Civil War, Emancipation, Thorough Equality (even Superiority) for the Negro—the whole vast effort to coerce and destroy—the entire body of the South's troubles—flowing straight out of Yankee civilization and the Yankee mind. Here, again, was that incalculably sensitive and fierce determination engendered in the South: the determination not to be coerced or destroyed in any essential part of its being. And so here, by an extension which would have been inevitable in any people and which was doubly inevitable in this one with its habitual incapacity for distinctions, was a propensity to see in every notion coming out of the North a menace and an abomination: to view every idea originated by the Yankee or bearing the stamp of his acceptance as containing hidden within itself the old implacable will to coerce and destroy: to repudiate this Yankee intellectually as passionately as he was repudiated politically.

And in this connection, we come upon a figure which deserves some notice. I mean the Yankee schoolma'am who, in such swarming numbers, swept down upon the unfortunate Southern country in the train of the army of occupation, to "educate" the black man for his new place in the sun and to furnish an example of Christian love and philanthropy to the benighted native whites. Horsefaced, bespectacled, spare of frame, and generally unlovely, this old gal was, of course, no proper intellectual, but at best a comic character, at worst a dangerous fool, playing insanely with explosive forces which she did not understand. She

had no little part in developing Southern bitterness as a whole, and, along with the peripatetic Yankee journalist, contributed much to the growth of hysterical sensibility to criticism. But nowhere was her influence more important than at the point with which we are immediately engaged.

For if she was not an intellectual, the South, with its vague standards in these matters, none the less accepted her as such. It saw her, indeed, as a living epitome of the Yankee mind, identified her essentially with the hyperborean universities, took her spirit for that of the best intelligence beyond the Potomac, read in the evils springing abundantly from her meddlesome stupidity categorical proof that Northern "theory" was *in toto* altogether mad. And so she served as a distinct power in bringing Southern fear and hate to explicit focus in the purely ideological field—in setting up as definite a resistance to Yankee thought as to Yankee deeds.

But the ultimately decisive force in establishing this focus and this resistance was, of course, theology—and the parsons. To appreciate this fully, however, we need to pause to remember that when we say Yankee thought and the Yankee mind we are in effect saying modern thought and the modern mind.

Already far advanced in the new mechanical civilization of the West even before the Civil War, this Yankee realm was, as everyone knows, to forge ahead in these post-war decades with ever mounting acceleration, steadily tearing away the leadership from England, and progressively moving upon its ordained rank as prime exponent of it all. And as it did this, it passed also, as steadily and almost as rapidly, under the influence of that corpus of new ideas and new knowledge—that mighty expansion of man's heritage—which accompanied the growth of the mechanical civilization in Europe in the Nineteenth century. In the years from 1880 to 1895, all the great Northern seminaries were completely made over. And by 1900 the whole of Northern thinking, properly so-called, was impregnated with the new *Verstand*. Nay, by 1900 Yankeeland had definitely taken up its place in the vanguard—was already becoming a chief protagonist, not of the machine alone but of the modern intelligence as well.

But now, as I need hardly tell you, the holy clerks of the Southern country regarded the growth of this modern mind with a

terror and a rage which, by so much as their faith was more primitive and absolute, was even greater than that with which it was regarded by Occidental theologians generally—saw in it simply the Faustian hell-compact, a gigantic conspiracy to crush truth out of the world, to loose the beast in man, and to strip them of their ancient sway. Determined to preserve their flocks from its contamination at any cost, they were honestly convinced, without ever so stating the proposition to themselves, that the use of any means to the purpose was justified, and even required of them by heaven.

Long since, indeed, we have observed them as they sniffed from afar its first landing on the shores of the American republic. Long since we have heard them raising the cry of "infidel" and "pagan" against Yankeedom—and proving it by the fact that this "European gangrene" was being suffered to fasten on Northern flesh. Long since, that is to say, we have found them quick to grasp the value of hate of the Yankee in relation to it; quick to see that, by identifying it as the peculiar property of this Yankee in America, it was possible to bring that hate fully to bear on it; to reinforce the colossal theological fury they could stir up against the thing in its own right, with an even more colossal patriotic fury—in fine, to trundle up against it the whole mass of Southern loyalties, and thus effectually to quarantine it at the Potomac.

And now, as the menace engulfed the world and swung close—why now, as the identification of Yankee and modern ideology waxed increasingly real and complete, they made their cries ever more shrill: gave themselves with crusading energy to the business of hammering home in the minds of their followers the notion of the two as one and inseparable: used all the sweeping power that was theirs for the whipping up of hate, for directing every atom of the South's fear and anger and pride to the repudiation of Yankee thought—and with it, the thought of the world.

Darwin, Huxley, Ben Butler, Sherman, Satan—all these came to figure in Southern feeling as very nearly a single person. And "infidel, atheistic, and Yankee-izing" became a formula which, explicitly or implicitly, would be repeated ten thousand times in these years. [Fall 1936]

‡ Two Poems by Glenn W. Rainey

The Blade Compassion

The heart has not enough of barriers
Against the blade compassion's naked thrust;
Caught unawares, failing, sometimes she must
Grove for some very wall of being. Hers
It is not even in the groves of spring
To hear the speaking of sweet winds alone,
But she must hear some breathing undertone
To rend her with a hard remembering.

[Spring 1936]

Destiny of Man

So far are we fashioned in the awful image,
So much it is to be poured in the mold of godhood:
To rise from the table of feasting gaunt-eyed with hunger,
On the bridal bed to pant for a sterner begetting;
In bronzes and symphonies belling the trace of an answer,
Through jungle, temple, and ether breaking the way to an
ultimate,
Disclosing and fulfilling, creating a world,
God-like—our guerdon forever to fail.

[Fall 1936]

✻ [A Review]

by D. F. McClatchey, Jr.

SOUTHERN REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, by Howard W. Odum. The University of North Carolina Press. \$4.00.

In 1931 a special grant was made by the General Education Board to the Social Science Research Council for a southern regional study. The Council appointed The Southern Regional Committee to make the study, and *Southern Regions of the United States* is a product of their work. Kendricks' *The South Looks at Its Past* is another product. Other volumes containing fruits of the committee's work are to be expected from time to time.

Southern Regions is designed to be both descriptive and purposive. It seeks to give an adequate picturization of the Region, to appraise its capacities for development, and to make an approach to a program of regional planning. The original intention was that the book should depict both the Southeast and Southwest, but the mass of material available made it expedient that this volume focus upon the Southeast, and leave the Southwest to be discussed in a future publication.

The first objective of the work is to describe the region from economic, sociological and cultural viewpoints. For the purpose, comparison of it with the other regions of the United States is the chief method employed. Hundreds of charts and graphs exemplify the text. In comprehensive, impersonal and unhurried fashion a detailed canvas is painted.

In very nearly every segment of the picture, the Southeast as a whole—the states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Arkansas—is demonstrated to rank far below the other regions of the nation. For example, the summary of a series of one hundred fifty-two indices shows the rankings of the re-

gions in order of priority to be The Middle States, The Far West, The Northeast, The Northwest, The Southwest, and The Southeast. The Southeast is deficient in practically every sociological and economic condition which can be tangibly measured.

Merely as a sample of the multitudinous problems of the region which are discussed, the following may be listed: a cash crop agricultural economy which has caused widespread erosion and continual economic crises; a very large number of tenant farmers; a lack of capital; a small industrial development; deficiencies in education, especially in regard to great universities qualified for graduate research; and a series of problems revolving around the Negro. All of these problems are aggravated by a widespread sectional pride and intolerance.

In decided contrast with such problems and deficiencies the natural resources of the region are an overflowing treasury of richness and abundance. There are long growing seasons and copious rainfall, legionary streams and hundreds of miles of sea-coast. Forests, minerals, fauna and flora of infinite species abound. Bountiful land, the summum bonum of Jefferson's dreams, and a large vigorous population pack the treasure chest to capacity. On the basis of its resources, the Southeast might well be the world's garden spot.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that despite such richness of resources, justifying a high development of culture, the Southeast has not adequate facilities for utilization of either its physical or human wealth. Prodigious waste results. Quoting the text at this point, "This chasm between abundance possibilities and deficiency actually lies at the heart of the southern problems, and . . . is in contrast to much of the national picture of actual abundance functioning in scarcity of use."

As stated, the first objective of the work is to describe the Southeastern region, and this goal is well attained. The second objective is purposive. It is sought to explore possibilities of improvement within the region.

Of essential importance in this respect is a regional instead of sectional viewpoint. Regionalism makes national welfare the final arbiter, while sectionalism sees the region first, the nation afterward. Sectionalism emphasizes political boundaries, local loyalties, "a confederation of states." Regionalism implies more of a

designed and planned society than sectionalism, which is the group correspondent to individualism.

In line with the purpose stated, more or less homogeneous sub-regions are delimited, and suggestions are made of alterations in agricultural and industrial economy desirable in them. For example, certain localities are peculiarly fitted for a dairy industry but are now devoted to cotton. In some, the land should be used only for pasturage; in others for truck farming.

An abundance of electric power calls for more and more manufacturing plants to process raw materials. A large population suggests an inexhaustible market for consumers' goods—if the buying power can be increased. The success within other regions of natives of the Southeast demonstrates their vigor and intelligence—but a large proportion of them migrate. The geographical situation is ideal for foreign and domestic trade, but the Southeast is a debtor region and imports far exceed exports.

Having described on the one hand the region as it now is, and on the other, as it might be in consideration of its resources, the author suggests tentative programs for regional planning. While it is recognized that the public has an aversion for planning, it is pointed out that planning movements have been recently gaining momentum, not only through "The New Deal," but also through action of states.

Four cardinal subjects for emphasis are suggested: (1) programs for development of agriculture; (2) for development of industry; (3) for solution of problems centering around politics and government; (4) for development of institutions of higher learning. Of the four the most pressing are considered to be programs for agriculture and for institutions of higher learning.

In connection with agriculture, among the problems requiring immediate attention are a reconstruction of the farm tenant system, reconstruction of the credit system, redistribution of crop land uses, immediate methods for raising the standard of consumption, promotion of inter-regional trade, and an increase of technical facilities for the production and processing of commodities. In connection with industry, government and higher education, a like number of problems are listed which require urgent attention.

To execute a planning program it is estimated that two six-

year periods will be required. If begun at once, they would culminate around the mid-century.

While, as mentioned above, it is conceded that the people of the Southeast are not ready for such a planning program, it is hoped that the present volume will aid in convincing the public that some program of the sort is necessary. When the region as a whole senses the chasm between, as the author puts it, "the respective economies of design and drift"—between the extraordinary possibilities promised by developed resources and institutions and the pathological prospect if they are not developed—when the people see these contrasting pictures clearly they will surely be in a more favorable mood for social planning. This volume should be of inestimable value in painting these contrasting pictures, whether or not the particular programs suggested by it are finally adopted.

The author, Dr. Howard W. Odum, is one of the most distinguished figures in the Southeast. In each of the fields of education, sociology and literature he is a recognized leader. Born in Georgia, he is a graduate of Emory, the University of Mississippi, Clark and Columbia. He has been a member of the faculties of Mississippi, Emory, the University of Georgia and the University of North Carolina in various capacities. At North Carolina, he has been Professor of Sociology since 1920, Director of the School of Public Welfare, Director of the Institute for Research in Social Science, and Dean of the School of Public Administration. He has engaged in many fields of service to the South and the nation, and has been recognized and honored nationally in ways too numerous to catalogue here. His qualification as author of the *Southern Regions* is evident.

Dr. Odum has published in addition to the present volume more than a dozen works, in addition to various articles and studies. Among his more recent publications are *Cold Blue Moon*, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, *Wings on My Feet*, *An American Epoch*, *An Introduction to Social Research* and *American Masters of Social Science*.

In *Southern Regions of the United States*, Dr. Odum has produced a work which should be required reading for everyone concerned with the welfare of the Southeast and the nation. [Winter 1937]

✻ Four Poems by Martha Hodgson Ellis

The Bride of Christ. Middle Ages

Let me keep my eyes cast down
Lest I sin, lest I sin.

See the moss upon the brick.
Can it be a devil's trick
To lure my eye to that sweet rose?
O dear soul, do you suppose
That the daisy in the grass
Was made to tempt me as I pass?

Prating tongue and sights that please
Where be evils such as these?

Alas, my sins to be so great
With silent mouth my mind doth prate.
For when you passed the other day,
Although I quickly turned away,
(O God forget that I did such!)
I reached my hand as if to touch!

Daisy, daisy in the grass,
Hide thee, let a sinner pass.

[Spring 1936]

Crane At The Water's Edge

He can not know how many designs
He makes with his thin and delicate lines.
A little less blue, a little more white,
He would be a shadow in the noon light.
On the bright beach, in the noon hush
I could paint the crane and the crane's bright shadow
From the same brush.

[Winter 1937]

To A New Englander In Florida

You are as out of place
As a robin in a palm tree.
And yet I know that every year
The robins do invade the palms
And clip their round, black berries with delight.

We cannot be too arbitrary
About these things.

[Spring 1938]

Apology

I am a prism sort of person
With the frail ability to break up light
Into its gentler hues,
Crystal so cut to filter out of white
Yellows and greens and blues.
Hung in the window of a sunnier world
I would have tinkled as the breezes raced;
Now with all skies storm-wracked and thunder-torn,
Tinkling is out of taste.

[Spring 1942]

✻ Demos Has a Diploma.

Now What?

by R. A. Schermerhorn

THE AMERICAN STATE UNIVERSITY—ITS RELATION TO DEMOCRACY. By Norman Foerster. The University of North Carolina Press. \$2.50.

Early in his genial and persuasive book, Professor Foerster tells of a bewildered undergraduate who rushed about the campus with a distracted air in September of his Junior year muttering, "My God! In two hours I'll have to know what I'm going to do the rest of my life." In this anything-but-apocryphal tale lies embedded the main problem of higher education today, its aimlessness, its lack of plan, organization or synthesis, its ineffectiveness when measured in the lives of its typical victims. There is hardly a one of us who has escaped these sad influences so we are likely to be sympathetic while the author unfolds his diagnosis of the confused patterns which have molded the thought of our American "educated" public, to which, we remember with a shudder, a good many of us belong.

The root of the difficulty, so the author tells us, lies in the expansive ideals, the pseudo-progressive tendencies which, beginning with the eighteenth century, have accumulated steadily increasing force in our own time, to our own undoing. Or, to change the figure, what he (following Irving Babbitt) calls "humanitarianism," interpreted as a weakly sentimental principle, is like a broad stream, fed by three tributaries which swelled the tide almost beyond control. The first of these historic contributions was Rousseau's idea of human nature as originally good, needing only development and expansion rather than discipline and ordered strength. The second stream, although it originated with Francis Bacon, came to full fruition in the nineteenth century as the notion of a steadily expanding scientific progress, demand-

ing, for the most part, only a division of labor and minute research. Third, and last of all, was the democratic ideal in its degenerate or easily acceptable form, which opened up education on equal terms to everybody regardless of aptitude, culminating in Charles Eliot's elective system, which Foerster believes to be thoroughly pernicious in its far-reaching effects.

As these three streams converged, they blended into a type of education in our state universities which mouths high ideals of power and service but which bogs down in crass materialism on the one hand and vague sentimentality on the other. Subsidized by the state, the university did not feel free to turn away a mass of uneducable students—instead it watered down its course of study. Adolescents everywhere parroted, "You can't get anywhere nowadays without a college diploma" and filled state institutions by as many as eleven thousand students per year in a single university. Yet a goodly number of these youngsters could not read, let alone write, with even the simplest facility. Again, overemphasis on science leads to a dogmatic naturalism which refuses to consider seriously any data which are not amenable to exact measurement or physical verifiability. It disregards all facts whatever which are not visible from its own perspective, and seeks to control the entire educative process by means of its limited techniques. Worst of all, specialization and research are being substituted for first principles; partly, Foerster suspects, because they can be carried on by mediocre men. The part has swallowed up the whole. The tail wags the dog. Students are taught by specialists who are teaching for the sake of a more refined specialization. The undergraduate pulls away from this toward pure utility, and the educative process oscillates between the two poles—utility before the A.B. degree, specialization afterwards. In between, the liberal idea of education goes sadly glimmering, since the university, like the newspaper, gives the student what he wants. To cap the climax, Eliot's principle, which implies equivalence of subjects, reduces undergraduate work to a dead level of sterility with the educator's selectivity lost in a maze of electives.

Is there a way out? The author believes in a very definite one, and unlike many other critics, attempts to outline positive ideals for improvement. First of all, the state university should rigidly

select its students and hold them down to a small number who are actually fit for liberal education. He praises Harvard's plan of scholarships to boys of high quality and asks that something like it be adopted in tax-supported institutions, in accordance with the ideal of Jefferson who proposed to the state of Virginia that it take a few of the best students from each grammar school and educate them at William and Mary College. By ruthlessly weeding out the unfit, Jefferson said, "twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish" and these, when cultivated, were to be leaders. Tax money was not to be wasted on the unfit, he declared, and Foerster sees no need to modify this eminently sensible idea.

After students come to college, the author believes that they should receive a broad and liberal training which will make them human beings in the full sense of the term, which will introduce them to the highest achievements of human genius in the past so that they can stretch their minds and begin living in a vaster world. Accustomed to living with Homer, Plato, Vergil, Dante, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Goethe, and other giants of the past, they will take on a different cast of thought, worthy of the leadership they are preparing for. Professor Foerster suggests four main branches in his liberal education: (1) Mathematics and natural science, (2) history, (3) literature, and (4) philosophy and religion. Apparently he agrees with Abraham Flexner that if students get a broad enough foundation, they can turn to any field of endeavor and make good use of their talents. In the words of President Coffman, whom he quotes with approval, "The more an individual is sharpened to a point, the broader the base should be."

Finally, and undergirding all, we are told that there must be an adequate philosophy which, in this case, is the familiar humanism of Babbitt, More et al. In a moment of weakness, Foerster admits that this philosophy is to be "unhampered by the logical necessities of naturalism" (p. 216) and based squarely on a dualistic account of human nature. In fact there are two dualisms, one of which asserts that consciousness or the inner life is independent of the bodily organism in some way. Secondly, there are the two forces within consciousness, the "temperamental will" and the "ethical will." The former is unending desire, the latter,

a controlling conscience, blended with reason yet fundamentally volitional in nature. Man alone can say no to his instincts, and it is this veto which makes him human and which needs to be developed as it has been throughout the centuries in art, religion and literature. The centripetal forces must win over the centrifugal. All this sounds banal and literal here, and the reader will find it persuasively argued with felicitous phrasing in more detail. The conclusion which the author draws, whatever one may think of the premises, is one which few would call in question, i.e., that society will not become any better than its individuals. Until we educate men to individual responsibility, democracy will automatically fail, whatever social schemes are set on foot.

The orientation of the entire volume is perhaps a bit unrealistic with respect to the massive economic forces in modern society. Any leader, trained in the universities, needs a thorough acquaintance with the intricacies of industrial and technical civilization beyond anything that Foerster urges, or else the values which he adopts will not function in the real world but in the purely literary one where the author is most at home. It is even pertinent to ask whether grading education hierarchically, as he suggests, can be accomplished without some of the regimentation which he deplores (but which Plato, incidentally, did not).

One may also ask whether it is not too late to ask state universities to abandon mass education entirely. One may admit that the aristoi should have a different degree and a different course of study and that they need to be separated from the general run of undergraduates. However if the great mass are given more real liberal education, rather than the crazy-quilt of vocational and specialized courses which they receive today, some of them may be awakened to the need for higher goals and eventually be admitted to the aristoi—as every teacher knows will occur to some in their junior and senior year. They, too, should be given their chance.

Foerster's strictures on naturalism are well-taken and yet the critical readers will remember that science itself, especially in higher physics, is passing beyond the old crude ideas of mass-particles in motion, to a view of nature which leaves the ultimate mysteries fresher and more inviting than ever before. In fact, modern philosophy, under the leadership of Professor White-

head, is perhaps revealing in nature itself values which surpass many of those which were formerly urged by supernatural theology. Instead of separating the scientific world view from the humanistic by an unbridged dualism which is more literal than dogmatic naturalism itself, would it not be well to blend the two as Plato himself did in his later years? If so, we would not have to give up logic entirely, as Professor Foerster would like to do.

Whatever one may think of details in this volume, it is a stimulating work, judicious in tone, buttressed with solid facts, supplying a needed emphasis in these days of shoddy thinking. If we may indulge in romanticizing, we might suggest that if state legislators would read this volume (and university presidents as well) it would mark a new era in their understanding of higher education in America. It might even cause some of our foundations to subsidize appreciative and aesthetic education as well as scientific, though that is probably a millennial dream. [Winter 1937-38]

✻ [A Review]

by James Weldon Johnson

THE INCREDIBLE MESSIAH. By Robert Allerton Parker. Little, Brown and Company. \$2.75.

Within the past seven or eight years more pages have been printed about the man known as Father Divine than about any other Negro in the world. The reasons for this are so obvious that they hardly need to be stated. In the rise of Father Divine the world has before it one of those extraordinary social and psychic phenomena that occur from time to time and which are actually beyond explanation—a man coming up from a submerged layer of society to hold great influence and power over many thousands of his fellows, and, furthermore, exercising a mystic personality to such a degree that his followers proclaim him a new incarnation of the Deity. This is why the far greater part of what has been written about this man runs to extremes: violent scoffing and vituperation on the one hand, and sheer burlesque and caricature on the other. The truth is not reached by either of these approaches.

The Incredible Messiah is a book that seriously approaches the whole subject as an important movement involving vital economic, social, and psychological forces. The author is Robert Allerton Parker. Mr. Parker has long been a student of and has previously written about similar social phenomena; so he follows as closely as is possible in a study of this kind the scientific approach. He presents the Divine Movement not only in its own light but also in light of movements more or less like it that have from time to time made their appearance.

Mr. Parker knows that it would be an idle task to write about the prophets without number who have risen proclaiming themselves the representative of God or even God; but he recognizes that when, as occasionally happens, one of these prophets induces a host of followers to accept him at his own evaluation a

situation is created that deserves to be studied. Such a situation arises out of the Divine Movement, with its adherents of not only the Harlem group but of groups in the Mid-West, on the Pacific Coast, in Canada, Alaska, Australia, England, Switzerland, and even in China.

Mr. Parker's study is not concerned with the truth or falsity of Father Divine's doctrines and claims but with the fact that the Movement is at the present moment a considerable reality in the social scheme. The reader will look in vain for any judgment on the author's part as to whether Father Divine is just a crack-brained fanatic or merely a shrewd demagogue; however, he is likely to come through the book with the feeling that Divine exhibits too much shrewdness and hard sense to be set down as being crack-brained, and demonstrates too high a degree of altruistic conduct to be pronounced a mere demagogue. [Winter 1937-38]

✻ Portrait
by Laura Benét

Eager for love that is not lean
Life that gave unreservedly,
Her fervent eyes survey the scene
With boundless curiosity.

In lodging house she builds a nest,
Flapping deaf ears to lose no word—
Neighbors regard her as a pest,
A fluttering, incessant bird.

A bird that preys upon their hive,
To pick up shreds of daily meat,
On endless chattering to thrive,
Its eggs hatched in another's heat.

With "What I saw" and "Where I went"—
As uneventful years roll on,
Her longing is for riches spent,
Licking a salt whose savor's gone.

Relatives run—those of more grace
Evade her queries as they may.
Yet in a glazed and cheated face
Youth's avid eyes devour the day.

[Spring 1938]

✿ Southern Trauma

by W. E. B. DuBois

CASTE AND CLASS IN A SOUTHERN TOWN. By John Dollard. Published for the Institute of Human Relations by the Yale University Press. \$3.50.

The story goes—I cannot vouch for its complete accuracy—that Dr. Hortense Powdermaker of the Yale Institute of Human Relations went to Indianola, Mississippi, to make a sociological study of race relations taking Dr. John Dollard with her as co-worker. Mass material was collected but Dr. Dollard, an expert psychoanalyst, got his material together first and rushed publication while the mass of sociological material still remains unpublished. This if true was unfortunate. Dr. Dollard's study is one of the most interesting and penetrating that has been made concerning the South and is marked by courage and real insight; but it lacks the proper sociological background and setting. One learns little about the population of Sunflower County, the progressive changes of its racial divisions, the age and sex classes and especially the basic land, work and economic data. It would have been extraordinarily illuminating if this brilliant psycho-analytical interpretation could have been built on a thorough economic foundation.

As it is, the reader finds himself floating a bit in the air despite Dr. Dollard's repeated disclaimers. The tendency in the book is to make this study of a small spot in the Mississippi bottom-land region symptomatic and characteristic of the Negro population of the United States. Generalizations built on a few interviews with local Negroes almost inevitably tend, in absence of similar studies elsewhere, to become statements concerning the Negro race in Mississippi, the South, the United States, the world.

With this general criticism in mind, what Dr. Dollard has done is to settle down in a little southern town for several months and study caste as a psychic phenomenon in the light of Freudian

psychology. He considers the general situation in a group where there is a small Negro middle class, a large white middle class, practically no hereditary white aristocracy, an overwhelmingly large class of Negro peasants and a large class of competing poor whites.

He frankly faces the matter of bias in the investigator himself and in the testimony which he is collecting. The reader gets the distinct impression that more or less unconsciously the attitudes of the middle class whites weigh largest in his mind and that he is not altogether to be absolved from the very usual and widespread suspicion of the testimony of educated Negroes. Nevertheless his efforts are evidently honest and perhaps he approaches the unbiased scientific attitude as well as one could expect from a person unacquainted with the white South. In such a person astonishment that Civil War animosities still live is apt to bulk large and this is clear in his chapter on "Attitudes toward the North."

His distinction of class and caste is illuminating and carefully worked out. First, there is a general chapter on the subject and in three following chapters, he takes up the "gains" or social advantages which the white middle class gets in income, sex and prestige. These chapters are the kernel of the book and they give at once the most frank and penetrating analysis of southern mentality which I have ever read. Their message will not be popular and will probably be bitterly resented in the South. They contain on the whole nothing essentially new as far as fact is concerned; but they raise fairly well known facts as to wage, levels of living, treatment, sex commerce and caste restrictions, from the level of the apparently unsupported statement of one observer to the higher plane of adjustment to widely known patterns of psychological reaction; so that their essential truth is recognizable because of their universality. Take, for instance, the matter of sex relations between white and colored people in the South: it has often been said that white men and colored women have contacts and that voluntary contacts of white women and colored men are not unknown; but what Dollard points out is that these reactions follow human and well known patterns. White men by virtue of their caste position have access to two classes of women and the very attempt to guard white women draws a burden of

sex feeling toward Negro women and arouses in retaliation not only the resentment of Negro men but the jealousy of white women and retaliatory impulses in both and that this complicated interaction explains much of the situation in this little town and in the South.

Other chapters follow: caste in education, politics and religion paint by far the most favorable but by no means satisfactory situation in education and least satisfactory and most paradoxical in politics. Then follows the description of the reaction; the accommodation attitudes and submissions of Negroes; the fact that limited retaliation upon whites increases to a certain extent aggression of Negroes upon Negroes and that white aggression upon Negroes is at bottom a defense of income, of ownership of women and inflated ego, carried out by actions which actually carry the war into dark territory for the ultimate sake of white integrity. All this is naturally defended by beliefs whose significance is not that they are true but that they are frantically stated and believed in: the inherent inferiority of the Negro; the impossibility of Negro education, and all that.

The gains of lower class Negroes by reason of economic irresponsibility and sex license are noted and the methodology of race prejudice arising from reaction to frustration and aggression and the lifting of tabu on hostilities; and particularly the ease of identification of the victim through color.

In an appendix there is a short study of the poor whites by Leonard W. Doob which is rather too narrow and limited to be particularly illuminating. Dr. Dollard's book marks a distinct advance in the study of the Southern scene. It fails to be completely satisfactory because of lack of underlying and explanatory sociological data; but when we can apply to the Southern situation not only sociological study but psychological interpretation we shall have made a distinct advance toward apprehending the truth. [Winter 1937-38]

✻ Two Poems by Lola Pergament

Greater Sum

My separate selves rebuke me for their cover.
In the loud daylight cast upon my walking
I bear the poise of night, its full look of a lover.
But they within me balking

this tide of grace, and they within me crying,
each with a perilous sound, beget an inner war,
ranting at death because the cross of dying
is dragged with humility over the earthen floor.

All but one have cried, "Do not deny me thrice!"
My thoughts have answered, "Never shall I deny you
while you are grief I bear to courage that must suffice.
But ever shall I defy you."

I know the denied go clamoring to the end.
To the last breath of daylight I shall hear each voice
drag woodenly across my mind. I shall defend
the processional grief, the Calvary. I shall rejoice

With those admitted at last to that small silence,
lodged in my will these fibrous years renew,
which says without sound but with the will's own violence,
"Above all, I am You!"

[Summer 1937]

Jordan Is So Chilly

Way down South where the women are ladies
and the bands creak *Dixie* with emotion,
the white folks tan in a democratic hades
but the niggers can't swim in their ocean.

The niggers have a beach with a separate sun
and a separate moon for the tide to come in,
but it's just as stylish as the white folk's one—
the moonbeams whiten the color of the skin.

When the niggers go in swimming the white folks drive by
with their eyes popped open and their tongues hanging mute.
They never knew such laughter could rock the floating sky
and they never saw a nigger in a bathing suit.

They never saw a nigger who wasn't so polite
he'd bend over backward to say nothing at all;
they never saw a nigger in the broad sunlight
building castles in the sand that were ten feet tall.

They never saw a nigger underneath a palm tree
drinking frosted mint juleps with his family;
they never toured through heaven or envisioned such a horde
of hosanna shouting nigger angels ducking for the Lord.

Way down South where the women are ladies
and the bands creak *Dixie* with emotion,
the white folks tan in a democratic hades
but the niggers can't swim in their ocean.

The niggers have a beach . . . it's not very wide
and it's put in a place where the waters don't mix,
but the sand is made of gold dust that sparkles on the hide
and the catfish come in fried.

[Fall-Winter 1938-39]

✻ Two Poems by Ann Cottrell

Backwoods

The rutted mountain road leads to Heaven
Where the swaying niggers and the poor whites
Leave behind their seven come eleven
And raise their calloused hands to the heights
And roar a Hallelujah for the saving rain
That 'roused the corn and broke the drought,
Filled the creek and the pond again,
Awoke the fish to bite, even the lazy trout.
Up the rutted road the spirits scrambled
While their sisters and brothers sat out the wake
Where around the casket they quietly gambled
With the corpse's mule as the sacred stake.

Dead Dog

Gorged in the belly,
Alone by the stream,
Feet flying forward,
And tongue on the green.
Locusts scream on
And orioles drink
'Til summer drains into snow.
Hares suck water through cracks in the ice
And squirrels hide nuts in the tree.
The woodland revolves on sober axis
With no fear of its entrails
To rot and decay
As the body on the bank
Sinks into bones, then away.

[Spring 1937]

✻ Disunion in Dixie²

by John D. Allen

A Symposium of Opinion Concerning THE ATTACK ON LEVIATHAN*

When the Southern Agrarians issued their first manifesto some years ago, critics were able to dismiss it easily—perhaps too easily—as on the whole a not very pertinent prank. Most of the contributions did seem to be the work of probably sincere but surely innocent poets, essayists, and scholars—innocent, that is to say, of elementary economic and scientific knowledge rightfully expected of sophomores. What these neo-Confederates, as they soon were labeled, had to say might be gratifying to self-conscious southerners and not without charm to admirers of fervid prose. But it lacked the ring of reality; it failed to command belief. Too, perhaps for most of the critics the economic sun had as yet not so darkened as to justify in any quarter the degree of acerbity and alarm the Agrarians evidently felt.

Two years ago the Agrarians shared in another symposium, *Who Owns America?*; and now Mr. Davidson presents a collection of articles and addresses composed for various occasions since 1932. Of *Who Owns America?* nothing more need be said here than that it revealed an important tendency of the original Agrarian clique: the urgent tendency to seek and discover bedfellows in strange places. Thus Mr. Davidson and his associates came to cot with such assorted company as Belloc and Eliot and Yeats and Frost, with Seward Collins, Herbert Agar, and (some of them) with Huey Long, not to mention a variety of less imposing consorts. And thus Southern Agrarianism as a movement of literary and social protest lost much of the identity and force it potentially had.

A second important tendency is revealed in Mr. Davidson's

* *The Attack on Leviathan*. By Donald Davidson. University of North Carolina Press. \$3.00. [Original Note.]

commentaries on "regionalism and nationalism in the United States." His views expressed and implied in the last chapter, "The Shape of Things and Men," are hardly the views explicit and implicit in "The Dilemma of Southern Liberals". In the main, the agrarianism of *The Attack on Leviathan* is not the agrarianism of *I'll Take My Stand*. There has been in Mr. Davidson's mind a steady growth and differentiation of attitude to the extent that it is safe to infer, Mr. Davidson now rejects some of his earlier basic opinions and importantly disagrees with others of the group on principles of faith. How far this centrifugal motion has carried his original companions, there is no ready means of judging. With Mr. Davidson it has obviously carried far.

This is said in praise of Mr. Davidson; but lest the intent be misunderstood, it will be well to praise in direct terms. Mr. Davidson possesses magnificent sincerity and integrity and, with them, as able a mind as has been involved in the Agrarian movement. To some of his opponents he has been unfair, but never maliciously so. Somewhat prodded, no doubt, by the opposition but mainly by his sincerity, he has put his mind to examine the loose bundle of first principles. Wide reading in history and browsing in economic theory have brought about some discarding of the untenable. Much that he formerly seemed willing to condemn sight unseen—for example, the social sciences—he now is willing to tolerate, and to use for his own valid ends. Nor is there so evident in the newer of the chapters that profound and almost superstitious distrust of the physical sciences and the mystical reverence for authority so characteristic of primitive Agrarian piety. Mr. Davidson is now able at times to do what some of his associates cannot do: distinguish between those who are scientists and those who prostitute science. In brief, he has ranged far, encountered much, and thought tenaciously and honestly and deeply since he first took his stand with the South, as the Agrarians saw it, and its agrarian tradition, as they gave it form. His present concept of regionalism, for which he usually prefers the emotionally richer term sectionalism, is one to which some of his readers will not seriously object.

Nor with many of his specific opinions in matters literary, educational, ideological is there deep cause for quarrel. If Mr. Davidson does much less than justice to Arthur Raper, something

less than justice to Howard Odum and his associates, to H. G. Wells—if all of his judgments show varyingly, the influence of his prejudices—he is, nevertheless, a shrewd interpreter and critic from whom his own critics may be able to learn. It is true that he wholly misses the significance of Proust. It is true that his discussion of liberalism hardly seems conclusive. But it is certainly true that one may read long passages without serious disturbance of mental poise.

To this recognition of Mr. Davidson's merits ought to be added a word about his style. It is an excellent style. It is vigorous, sharp, direct, clear, as finely adequate to its function as the lean body of the frontiersman, whom Mr. Davidson poetically exalts in the chapter on the Old Southwest. What the style has to convey is, indeed, sometimes as much fancy as fact. Most of the chapters descriptive of the sections fall in the former category. But there is never any mannerism, never any deliberate, tongue-in-cheek obscurity, never any thimble-and-button verbalizing, never any effort to dispose of an objection by imitating the octopus's tactics. Hence there is rarely an occasion for doubt as to what Mr. Davidson actually meant to say. In this respect, too, his work is decidedly a more serious and admirable performance than that of some who have tagged themselves Agrarians.

But admirable as it is, *The Attack on Leviathan* can not require full faith. Mr. Davidson has tried to do what, of course, every one who uses his mind tries with varying energy and success: to make a believable picture of the world in which we live. Honesty and keen intelligence have caused him to reject certain lines, certain shadings, of his initial sketch. The same unusual virtues may lead him to reject still others. However that may be, the present picture exhibits flaws the ultimate source of which it is not hard to guess. The source is the conditioning influence upon a sturdy poetic talent of the Jeffersonian-Jackson traditions in which Mr. Davidson grew up—the semi-pioneer, petty capitalistic, and agrarian Tennessee which, though decadent, still existed in his youth. That that Tennessee is gone quite beyond recovery, except in words, his mind is compelled to admit but his emotions rebelliously deny.

It is this emotional bias, blurring the pages of prosaic history, that stirs Mr. Davidson to rhapsody when he writes about the

Old Southwest. It is this bias, in need of rationalization, that opens his heart too readily to other groups and other sections wherein some similarity of manners and customs can be not too unsurely discovered. It is this bias which feeds greedily upon Turner's studies of the influence of the frontier in American history, and disdains the more fruitful, when fully grasped, hypotheses of Beard. And it is this bias which allows Mr. Davidson to confuse industrialism and cosmopolitanism and monopoly capitalism and science so that, at times, they are made to seem interchangeable terms; this bias which prompts him to single out the Northeast (rather, the urban Northeast and particularly New York City) as the tyrannical exploiter of the regions and the immediate source of all the poisons, real and imagined, which he finds in the bloodstream of American culture. It is this bias that blinds him to the fact that urban workers, in Nashville as well as in New York, are exploited no less effectively than farmers and tenants in Tennessee. It is, finally, this bias that compels him to ignore the fact that the underlying conflict in America is plainly today, if it has not always been, a conflict not between section and section but between class and class.

The Old Southwest, in tradition, was a manly, romantic region, and who would not like to recall it? Who, given a poet's high talent, would not like to revive it in song? And rightly so, too. But the Old Southwest is dead, as dead as the old Southeast (which also has left traditions, some of them scarcely suitable for song). And dead, too, are the other sections about which the Agrarians insist on writing in prose. What survive are a number of regions, each with its distinctive features, each with its special problems—and each with a vital need to share in re-creating a healthy American civilization. There is no point in singling out the Northeast as the malignant breeder of America's ills. There is much point in seeing that exploitation is exploitation whether in Nashville or in New York. And there is great point in seeing that only strong men of good will, trusting in science and guided by stout reason, can do anything useful about it.

Mr. Davidson has the strength and the will and the reason. If, freeing the poet in him through discipleship to science, he should decide to do something about it, there is no southern writer who could wield a more effective sword. [Spring 1938]

✻ Two Poems by James Still

Sun-Ball On The Mountain

Now has day come immense upon the hills,
The hounds drop hungrily down the ridge,
And the fox has barked in worn defeat.
Foals shake damp manes in burning near-light,
And it is rooster-crow! Light crowds the door
Swung outward, chilled hearths fire slowly
From slovenly coals. Night grovels on its knees.
Sun-ball on the mountain. The suckling child
Mouths the swollen breast, and foals nuzzle
The mare's dark teats. Fog rises slowly,
Yawning in the valleys, swallowing hill and ridge.
Men have awakened. They have gone out upon the land
With night's far wisdom dark within their eyes
And querulous day at hand.

[Summer 1937]

Death Of A County Sheriff

His face is quiet as a fable, and his hands
Are wise with death. He had known this time was here
Under a moon's phase, under a certain season;
And he'd lived, the preacher said, by law, horse-sense and reason.
His span of gun and rope is through and ineradicable.
He hung three. He shot seven in the way of duty,
And cut a single notch to heal a wounded pride.
He sired five. He owned the house in which he was born,
And two fat nags, and forty-six acres of crows and corn.
Here are his days summed: vote, gun, statute, child, wife;
Here yellows his almanac of years, his full-flagged weather of life.

[Summer 1946]



Elegy

by Charlotte Wilder

If, sometimes, walking in a glade,
We chance to think of those who walked
In earlier days—the sweet, the young
Or vagrant aged: a ghost who stalked

Beside and with and in each step,
Which was a shape *their* memory bore,
Is with us, too; and this no less
Than Styx' or Jordan's lavéd shore.

The dead resign to us their dead.
Emptying phantom hearts of loss,
They leave us, too, as ghosts untold,
The glade, their unrelinquished fold.

[Spring 1938]



Lean Harvest

by Edd Winfield Parks

Nothing certain, nothing steadfast,
Travail of souls never at rest,
Denial and doubt, these our minds cast:
Tumult and storms make lean harvest.

[Fall 1937]

✻ From the novel *Purslane*³
by Bernice Kelly Harris

Miss Jennie hummed her funny little monotone at her morning's work. Her step was a little brisker, her movements more purposeful, her eyes brighter, and her voice cheerier as she called Fido to his bowl of mulberry pie that hadn't turned out as good yesterday as the receipt sounded. For Aunt Sad had told her Sunday to come spend Wednesday at her house, and days at Aunt Sad's were always red letters in Miss Jennie's life.

After clearing the table and covering the dishes with a white cloth, scalding the fly trap and baiting it with molasses, pouring a gourd of water in the chicken trough, and adding water to the tin cans in which the legs of her safe stood ankle-deep, Miss Jennie took the window sticks out and propped them securely over the bottom window sash, before rearranging her hair in a figure eight at the back of her head and pinning on her black sailor. Last of all she tied the white apron, with the crocheting at the bottom, over her black skirt, and then hoisting her parasol she set off up the road.

Aunt Sad took her at once into the kitchen and let her help with the dinner; they could talk freer, working. As she rolled the Irish potatoes around in the tub with a rock to break the skins, preliminary to scraping them with a knife, Miss Jennie told about the story she had read in *Kind Words*, and from that it was a natural transition to the receipt for stickies that she had found last week in *Farm and Hearth*. No, she hadn't tried it yet; it took so much butter and sugar, and she happened to be out of spices right now, too. Aunt Sad, singeing a chicken she had just picked, suggested that Miss Jennie try stickies today; there was plenty of butter, sugar, and everything she would need in the safe. Pinning a blue apron over her white one, Miss Jennie was sparkling eyes went happily to work. She rolled her dough very short, with more lard in it than she ever had to use at home, into small thin rounds, on which she spread butter and sugar copiously; after

sprinkling ground cloves, mace, and nutmeg lightly over the top, she folded the dough into oblong rolls and baked them a golden brown in Aunt Sad's nice oven, without having to shift the pan from bottom to top to bottom grate or blowing off the ashes as in the oven at home.

"It says use these in a saucer with any tart fruit in season, preferably tart, anyway." Proudly she displayed her rolls.

"There's enough gooseberries ripe if they'll do. Go yonder, look by the smokehouse bush—"

"I'll go gather a panful."

When Miss Jennie returned with the gooseberries, Aunt Sad had dried out a piece of bacon left from yesterday's boiling and was lifting into the hot grease in the frying pan a flesh-fork full of stewed cymblings; with onions sliced into the pan she began the tedious hot work of browning the mixture. Between stirrings she spread the white damask over the dining table, although Miss Jennie begged her, as was custom, not to put on the Sunday cloth just for her. Not much of the white showed by the time the platter of chicken fricassee, browned squash, buttered potatoes, green snap beans with slices of ham on top, red beets submerged in butter and sugar, stewed tomatoes, pickles, preserves, hot biscuits and corn bread, peach pie and gooseberry rolls, a dish of cup cake, the caster in the center with its vinegar cruet, salt and pepper, were placed on the table.

Neither of the women ever ate very much, but something in each was satisfied by the hot and tiring preparation and the appraising pause when each woman looked over the food and saw that it was good. Then Aunt Sad lifted the dish of snaps to start the meal.

"I know Jimmy's grace by heart, but I never believed in women tryin' to take a man's place." Aunt Sad always prefaced the meal thus.

"I know you miss havin' somebody to say grace." Miss Jennie always responded to her cue thus.

"Nobody but them that's been through it knows how bad it is."

"I missed Pa a heap. I still miss him. But I know it is bad to go through, with a husband."

Miss Jennie had been among those who had seen Jimmy's death five years before as a blessing. "Sad couldn't hold out much

longer to wait on Jimmy," the neighborhood women had whispered, not adding that Jimmy's querulous complaining and crabbedness were wearing Sad down quite as much as the physical wear and tear of lifting, rubbing, washing for the invalid, preparing an exacting diet, and sitting up nights. But Aunt Sad was left pretty blank; Jimmy's going had not wholly taken the purpose and direction out of her life, for it had given her a grave.

"Have some cymblin's. This is the way Jimmy use to love them and I always took a whole mornin' to fix them right—"

"Have you ever tried bakin' them in the oven? It's not as hot and tiresome, and they taste—"

"No." Aunt Sad was almost sharp. "This is the right way. Jimmy wouldn't touch them unless they were browned on top of the stove in dried-out meat grease."

"Your beets are bigger than mine. I haven't had any but twice this summer, and one time I tried a new way—buttered them when they were hot, and I declare they didn't taste bad. I had read—"

"This is the only way beets is fit to eat, plenty of vinegar and sugar and pepper. Jimmy wouldn't touch them if they wa'n't fixed like these is today."

"Everything's mighty good. Seems like these is the best snaps I ever tasted."

"Jimmy always wanted them cut up fine like this; the seasonin' went through them better; and he never thought they was fit to eat unless the grease stood a half-inch deep all around the dish."

"'Tis better—if you have the meat."

So was the hunger of two, without direction toward appeasement, satisfied a little by musing over food that memorialized other appetites than their own.

"He use to hunt up my cookin' at picnics and August meetin's and wouldn't touch nobody else's, unless Dele's now and then."

"I remember. I use to try to get him to taste my dinner but he was always full he said, and then I'd see him ease over toward your vittles—"

"Well, I learned how to fix things his appetite called for. When we was first married he use to come in the kitchen and tell me how his Ma fixed things for him—"

"And what was it you said the time you walked in on him?" The conversation always headed this way.

"Law, that!" Aunt Sad laughed mirthlessly. "I was so bashful I was even ashamed of my own self when I first got married. Men folks ain't ashamed, Jennie. They soon strip off before you the first night—"

Miss Jennie's little ears pinkened, and the pulse quickened in her throat as she aimlessly played with the vegetables on her plate. Aunt Sad absent-mindedly forked a beet from the dish as she went on.

"Jimmy just soon to anyway. But I turned my head away or left the room when he got to his pants—at first; you get over that. But you know, Jennie, I never did get use to a man havin' hair on his breast, and I wouldn't look at it—till Jimmy got sick." Aunt Sad smoothed a wrinkle in the tablecloth; she was again rubbing a poor white body.

"And then you walked in on him—"

"That was the week after we got married. Jimmy was in the kitchen washin', standin' there stripped naked as my hand, when I walked in to cook supper, thinkin' he was at the lot. Seemed like I couldn't move, but I just started hollerin', 'Don't look, don't look, don't look!' And all the time my eyes was set on him there, naked as my hand."

"Then—" Miss Jennie's voice was hardly audible as she shifted her snaps to the other side of her plate.

There was a meditative pause. "Well, I was broke from then on, though I never did get use to the hair on his breast." Some day Miss Jennie felt sure Aunt Sad would reveal just what did take place in the kitchen that day. "But law, after you live with a man a while his body don't seem no stranger than your own, hair or no hair."

They washed the dishes, filled the cooler with vegetables which they let down with a rope into the well, and sat on the back porch awhile to continue the idyl. It ended today as always in a pilgrimage to the graveyard. With parasols hoisted, they bore to the shrine a weeding hoe, a water bucket, and an armful of roses. At the churchyard they made the usual rounds, the usual comments.

"'Annie and Fannie, born December eight, eighteen eighty-

five; died July tenth, eighteen eighty-seven.' It was their second summer; they had cholera morbus I remember." They walked sadly away from the twin headstone over to where Grandpa Pate's two wives "rested in peace" under a gnarled oak. "'Rachel, wife of Calvin Pate, born eighteen thirty, died eighteen sixty-two. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. R. I. P.' . . . 'Sara, wife of Calvin Pate, born eighteen thirty-nine, died eighteen seventy-seven. She hath done what she could. R. I. P.'"

"Mr. Calvin Pate will go right here, and then Miss Bettie next to him. I hope she'll have something pretty over her too. She's a good woman; she's raised three flocks of children."

"Yes, Jimmy thought a lot of her."

"'Oh for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still' is pretty, and it's not on a single tombstone. Ain't it pretty?"

"Yes, that's all right. This here grave of old Mr. Batten ought to be fixed up. It's caved in bad. Look, you can see the edge of the coffin."

The women mused sadly by the neglected grave. "Old Mr. Batten use to bring me red-streaked candy when he'd come to sit with Pa till bedtime. It was pitiful to hear him tell how bad he missed 'Sweet Betsey,' as he always called her."

"And spit worse'n a goose. But he was a good man."

"You can't even make out the words on Miss Betsey's tombstone, it's so old and black now." Miss Jennie stooped to pull up the weeds at the foot of the grave.

"'Elizabeth—Eighteen seventy-eight—She is—precious—rubies.' I can make that much out."

"I wouldn't want to be weatherboarded up like this, would you?" Miss Jennie stepped around a grave and peered through an opening near the roof of the miniature wooden tent where a single grave piqued the curiosity of the neighborhood. "I rather have the sun and rain and moon on me."

"Maybe she rather be shut up though."

"Do you reckon—?" Miss Jennie would not say it. It was well enough to speculate at home on back porches whether this stranger had been a good woman or not, but here awe and pity overcame curiosity.

Aunt Sad was less reticent. "What did a strange man bring her here for—in a strange graveyard where she had no folks—and put her away without any preacher or song or mourners?"

"They said the man cried like a baby."

"Yes, Jimmy said he did. But no women folks here and no funeral—Job was against puttin' her here, in spite of all the man said about the body couldn't make it no farther, and Jimmy said he was with Job till Wes said something about 'a stranger and ye took me in.' Wes never was one for sayin' verses, but seemed like that time he just spoke out before he thought and then walked away and let them do as they saw fit. Well, here she lies."

"Le's put one rose on her grave."

"We can't. There's no door. She's shut up."

"I can reach my hand through here—" Aunt Sad handed her a bud.

"Emmie keeps little Essie's grave nice. She's going to put a little angel here soon as she saves enough butter money to buy one."

"Those little shells look sweet around the grave. She brought home a satchelful from Morehead City. Essie was a good child."

"Yes, she was a good child. This tombstone over poor Willie is going to fall if it ain't tended to soon. 'Willie Pate, aged twenty-two, died eighteen eighty-nine, son of Millard and Cynthy Pate. How many hopes lies buried here.' "

"That sounds like they believed Willie did kill himself."

"I reckon we all believe it a little, but it's best just to let it go as a huntin' accident. It's the only way to stand it."

"What poor Willie could want to die for—He was a good boy."

"'Eveline Smith, wife of Tom Smith—Sleep on, beloved, sleep and take thy rest—' It don't seem right though for Ev to be lyin' down restin' this time o' day, dressed up in her Sunday black dress, when she never stopped stirrin' 'till sundown and up before day feedin' pigs and choppin' cabbage rows and—"

"She was a good woman."

"Yes. She wanted Jimmy, and tried mighty hard to get him when we was girls together, but she made Mr. Smith a good wife, yes. And now already he's gettin' frisky and real mannish at church Sundays, when—"

Aunt Sad suddenly turned away and hurried to her own grave, a refuge and an anchor. With the hoe she worked the violets she

had planted around her square, while Miss Jennie went to the well in the church grove for water to fill the vases half buried on the mound. She wet her handkerchief and washed off the lettering, reading as she worked: "Jimmy Pate—There shall be no night there." Aunt Sad placed the roses in the vases and involuntarily smoothed with her hands the sand above the body she had soothed so many times on the bed at home.

"It looks so nice to see husband and wife lyin' side by side with violets all around, takin' the rain and the sunshine together," Miss Jennie observed wistfully, as she polished "no night there." But she was not depressed as she walked slowly back to her cottage at sundown, albeit she would have to take the weather alone. It had been such a pleasant day! [Spring 1939]

✻ Poor Land and Peasantry⁴

by Arthur Raper and Ira DeA. Reid

The general character of the American peasant is well known. He has a love of location, follows a subsistence type of farming, requires little cash, and within his way of life is perhaps the most independent man in America.

The collapse of the old upland cotton plantation system of the South points to an expanding peasantry. So, too, does the increased mechanization of farm and factory. Erstwhile sharecroppers and farm wage hands—sub-peasants—take to the open roads while idle factory workers lengthen city breadlines. Permanent relief would not be a satisfactory answer; no, not even if we Americans liked to pay taxes! For among the uprooted workers themselves there has been and is an unmistakable strain toward self-support on the cheapest land—hillsides stripped of timber, eroded cotton fields. Poor land and peasantry go together in Dixie.

The spread of the slave plantation from Eastern Virginia around to Texas resulted in the concentration of the best lands into large holdings and the influx of Negro slaves. Two-thirds of the South's white families, however, had no slaves at all, and half of those who did had five or less. The rank and file of white frontier families had the choice of moving out of the rich soil areas or of accommodating themselves to the competition of slave labor. Some went along with the frontiersmen ahead of the cotton plantation as it moved toward Texas. Others drifted into nearby unproductive areas which the plantation owners did not want. The wiregrass region, lying inland from the old coastal settlements, was another haven for poor whites until the use of bagged fertilizer made possible the commercial production of tobacco, peanuts and melons.

But the greatest number of uprooted whites moved into the Appalachian foothills, deep into the mountains, or on across to the rich valleys and plains beyond—where there was neither slave plantation nor peasantry. Whole communities of Western

Carolina, North Georgia, North Alabama, East Tennessee and Kentucky were settled by the families pushed off the rich lands of the Old South. As the cotton plantation rolled across the South's fertile crescent from northeast to southwest, Ozarkia became the South's second largest center of peasantry.

By the turn of the century most of the poor lands—that is to say, the cheap lands—were filled to overflowing. The surplus rural population began the trek to the cities. At first the migration was in response to higher wages, modern conveniences, superior educational opportunities and, particularly for the Negroes, greater security from mob violence.

In the decade following 1922, many rural people came to urban communities as refugees. The farm population was responding to the burdensome unbalance between the urban and rural economies brought to crisis by the advent of the boll weevil. Their welcome in the city was short-lived.

By the winter of 1932 unemployment was piling high in practically all American cities. Many recent comers had not found jobs or had only insecure work, soon discontinued. Construction was at a standstill; street paving had slowed down; only a few new residences were being built, no new skyscrapers. Numerous store fronts bore "For-Rent" signs. Many factories were working part time, others closed. City welfare agencies were swamped. The states had no effective system of unemployment relief.

Looking at the people in the city breadlines, public officials began to emphasize their rural origin; began to comment upon the abandoned land in the rural sections. Chambers of commerce became interested. In some instances municipal trucks were available to take stranded city dwellers back to rural areas. The city's cost-accounting was simple: free transportation to the rurals was cheaper than relief maintenance in the city.

Relatively few urban families have been rehabilitated on farms, but relief agencies have kept many of the rural unemployed from migrating to the cities, and have sent many stranded urban families back to the rural areas from which they had come. In 1935 upward of a half million families were living on farms who had been living in non-farm residences five years earlier. The population study of the National Resources Committee shows that most of these families "settled near industrial and mining communities

and in subsistence farming areas on lands that are infertile, poorly drained, or located on steep hillsides."

During the same years that many unemployed urban families were turning to subsistence farming on poor land as "a stop-gap to tide them over a period of unemployment," there was an outward thrust of population from the best farm areas of the South due to the low prices, cotton control programs, and soil-conservation crops best planted and harvested by machinery.

With an enforced movement of plantation workers off the most productive land of the South at the same time that work opportunities were shrinking up in cities, large groups of people were forced to make adjustments. The only alternative open to the stranded folk, whether urban or rural, was to be supported by relief where they were or to seek out places where they could live cheapest—almost without money. As the relief records show, the vast majority remained in the communities where they lost their jobs. Nonetheless, hundreds of thousands have made their own adjustments downward, either by remaining in poor-land regions or by leaving wealthy cities and fertile lands for rural areas where land is cheap.

An elderly man in an isolated cove of Western North Carolina was visited by a relief worker. She inquired about the effects of the "depression." He had heard nothing about any "depression." The only difference he could see between now and ten years ago was that nearly all his children had come back home with their families. Young men who left the mountains in oxcarts for the high wages of the city are bumming rides back home on concrete roads. They are going back because they can live there independently and cheaply—the self-sufficiency of peasants can always be shared.

With the old peasant regions full to overflowing and with surplus labor still accumulating, stranded urban and good-land workers are beginning to move toward the cheap gullied lands of the old upland plantation region. Erosion had rendered millions of acres here ready for peasants even before the depression defined the personnel of those who should, shall we say, inherit it.

With no job, people tend to turn homeward, and the old plantation section was once home for millions of people now scattered throughout the nation, particularly in southern cities and in the

North and East. Fully one-third of the migrants were Negroes, but thus far they have made no appreciable return movement, simply because the South's peasant opportunities—except in a few coastal counties—are limited almost solely to the whites. The reasons lie in the same economic and social forces that normally curb Negro landownership.

The reasons why these stranded white workers stay on the cheap land are evident: technological advancement is increasing at a faster rate than production; many of them with high school and college education—are eagerly stepping into all available jobs; there are more youths maturing in the rich-land regions than can find work there. Thousands of families forced to leave the dustbowl area have overrun the one region to which some of the surplus cotton folk might have moved—the new agricultural regions of Arizona, New Mexico and California.

Except for crop subsidies, many more plantations would have been taken over by Eastern financial interests; except for public works, to supplement farm incomes, a larger number of the sharecroppers and wage hands on the best lands of the South would by now have been forced into this downward adjustment of peasant farming.

Other important adjustments to the shrinking cotton economy are seen in the increase of small knitting mills, candlewick bed-spread tufting, sour-cream routes, tourist homes, basket-weaving, fox furs and cedar in Tennessee, peddling in almost any community. Much of the present interest in southern newspaper pulp turns upon this urgent need for new sources of income, felt not only around the edges of the cotton belt, but in the center of it.

The southern region is being raked for incomes to keep standards from dropping even lower than they are. The desperateness of the situation may cost the region heavily: the candlewick industry is a fertile field for sweated labor, the supply of splits for baskets can be easily exhausted, too many furs for sale will slay the last red fox and too much red cedar for pencils will chop the last tree; enough sour-cream routes can be started to drop the price to nearly nothing, while in cutting small logs for paper pulp the new cycle of forest exploitation may be shorter and more disastrous than the old one of sawmilling. The adage "A bird in

the hand is worth two in the bush" is true only if birds are not needed next season. Peasantry on poor land is a defensible adjustment for erstwhile workers from fertile field and wealthy city only if society is incapable of constructively relating abundant resources and techniques to man's basic needs.

Land that has always been relatively poor for farming is the scene of America's oldest and most adequate peasantry; land that was once highly productive, but has been mined of its fertility, is the scene of America's newest and least adequate peasantry, for in these decadent plantation areas the soil has been depleted and the people have been schooled—as sub-peasants—in the dependency of the sharecropping system.

The old peasantry was an adjustment on hilly land of poor but independent families to the slave regime; the new peasantry is an adjustment on depleted soil of a stranded population unable to find jobs on rich lands or in wealthy cities.

The roots of America's peasantry lie in the concentrated ownership and control of wealth, be that wealth in farm lands, forests, fossil fuel reserves, factories, stores or mortgages. Taken broadly, a plantation is a plantation whether in the rural or urban community, whether simple and hoary as the cotton plantation or complex and shiny as the chain store. [Winter 1939–40]

✿ The Moving⁵

By James Still

We stood by the loaded wagon while Father nailed windows down and spat into keyholes to make the locks turn. We waited, restless as the mare, anxious to haste beyond staring eyes. Hard-stay mine was closed, and idle men had gathered to see us leave. They hung over the fence; they squatted among last year's dog-tick stalks. Boys glanced at the windowpanes, pockets bulging with rocks. I spied into their faces, and homesickness grew large inside me. I hungered for a word, a nod of farewell. But only a witty was sad at my going, a man bound to live forever a child, and speak things backward. Hig Sommers stood bug-eyed, and fellows picked at him. One kneeling jerked loose the eel strings of his brogans.

Though women watched from porches, only a widow came to say goodbye to Mother. Sula Basham came walking, tall as a butterweed, a yellow locket swinging her neck like a clock weight. Loss Tramble spoke, grinning: "If I had a woman that tall, I'd string her with gourds and use [her for a] martin pole. Aye, God, I would, now." A dry chuckle rattled in the crowd. Loss stepped aside, knowing Sula's temper, knowing muscle frogs on her arms were the size of any man's.

Sula leaned toward Mother. The locket dropped like a plumb. Mother was barely over five feet and had to look upward as into the sky. Her eyes set on the locket, for never had she owned a grain of gold, never a locket, ring or bighead pin. Sula spoke loudly, glancing at the men with scorn. "Ought to be proud your man's not satisfied to rot setting on his chinbone. Afore long all's got to move from this camp, all's got to roust or starve. This mine hain't opening again. Hit's too nigh dug out."

The men stirred uneasily, not willing to think a woman had spoken truth. Still Lovelock lifted hands, spreading them like a preacher's. "These folks air moving to nowheres," he said. "No camps along Kentucky River a-taking of workers. Hit's mortal

sin to make gypsies of a family. I say long's a body got a roof-tree, roost under it."

Men grunted, doddering their heads, and boys lifted heavy pockets and sidled toward the wagon.

Cece Goodloe snatched Hig Sommers' hat as he passed, clapping it onto his own head. The hat rested upon his ears. The boys placed hands on the wheels; they fingered the mare's harness; they raised lid of the tool box to see what was there. Cece crawled under the wagon, back hound to front hound, shaking the single-tree as he came forth. I watched out of the tail of my eye, fearing a rusty might be pulled.

Father came into the yard with the key, and now the house was shut against turning back. I looked at the empty hull of our dwelling. I looked at the lost town, yearning to stay in this place where I was born. Father lifted the key on a finger. "If a body'd drop this by the commissary, I'd be obliged," he said.

Hig Sommers ran to Father, his shirt-tail flying. Someone had shagged it out. "I'll fotch it," Hig said, reaching. Father glanced oddly at Hig. "I'm not a-wanting it fotched," he said. "I want it tuck."

Sill Lovelock stepped forward, but he didn't take the key. "They's Scripture agin' a feller hauling off the innocent," he vowed. "I say stay where there's floor underfoot and joist overhead."

Father grunted. "They ought to be a statute telling a feller to salt his own steers," he said testily. "Ruther to drown o' sweat hunting work than die o' dry rot in Hardstay."

Loss Tramble edged near Father. His eyes brightened, but he drew his mouth down soberly. He nodded his head toward Sula Basham. "I'll deliver that key if you'll take this beanpole widow woman along some'eres and git her a man. She's wore the black bonnet long enough."

Laughter sprang forth, gulping throats. Sula whirled, her face lit in anger. "If I was a-mind to marry," she said, "It's certain I'd have to go far. I'd be bound—"

"What air you to eat for bread along the way?" Sill Lovelock asked Father, paying Sula and Loss no mind. "No manna in the wilderness this day and time."

Father was grinning at Sula. He saw muscle knots harden on her arms, and Loss inch away. He turned to Sill in good humor "Why, they's a gum of honeydew on leaves of a morning. We kin wake early and lick it off."

"Ah, now," Mother said, calming Sula. "Menfolks are heathens. Let them crawl their own dirt." She was studying the locket. I recollected Mother's pierced ear lobes where never a bob had hung, the worn stems of her fingers never circled by gold, her plain bosom no pin-pretty had ever hooked. She was looking at the locket, not covetously, but with wonder.

"I'll take the key," Sula told Father.

Loss opened hands, face grave as Sill Lovelock's, mocking. He pointed a hand toward Sula, the other appealing to the crowd. "Allus pitied a widow," he said. He spanned Sula's height with his eyes. "In this gethering they ought to be one single man willing to marry the Way Up Yonder woman."

Sula's mouth hardened with words. "I want none o' your pity pie," she blurted. She took a step toward Loss, the sinews of her long arms quickening, then she halted and turned away. She turned to Mother, who had just climbed on the wagon, needing barely to tilt her head, though Mother sat high on the jolt seat. "You were a help when my chap died," she said. "You were comfort when my man lay in his box. I hain't forgetting. Wish I had a keepsake for you, showing I'll allus remember."

"I'll keep you in head," Mother assured her.

"I'd be proud was there a thing I could give."

We were ready to go. "Climb on," Father told me. I swung up from hindgate to tiptop of the load. Over the heads of men I could see the camp, the shotgun houses in the flat, smoke rising above burning gob. The pain of leaving leapt in my chest.

Father clucked, tongue against teeth. The mare started. She walked clear out of the wagon shafts. Loose trace chains swung free, and pole-ends of shafts bounded to the ground. "Hold!" Father shouted, jumping out. A squall of joy sounded behind us. Cece Goodloe had pulled the rusty. He'd done the unfastening. Father smiled while adjusting the harness. Oh, he didn't mind a clever trick. He sprang into the wagon again.

Loss Tramble cupped hands into a horn, calling through: "If

you don't aim to take this widow along, we'll have to marry her to a born fool—Hig Sommers. No other chance earthy."

We drove off, wheels taking the groove of ruts, the load swaying. Still Lovelock cried a last warning. "You're making bed in hell!" Then I saw the locket about Mother's neck. It beat her bosom like a heart.

I heard rocks break windows of our house, and I looked back. I looked back on the camp as upon the face of the dead. Men and boys were crowding around Sula Basham. She had struck Loss Tramble, and he knelt before her, fearing to rise. And only Hig Sommers watched us go away. He stood holding up his breeches, for someone had cut his galluses with a knife. He thrust one arm in air, crying, "Hello, hello!" [Winter 1940-41]



Whose Eye is on the Sparrow⁶

by Byron Herbert Reece

I saw a fallen sparrow
Dead upon the grass
And mused to see how narrow
The wing that bore it was.

By what unlucky chance
The bird had come to settle
Lop-sided near the fence
In sword grass and nettle

I had no means to know;
But this I minded well:
Whose eye was on the sparrow
Shifted, and it fell.

[Summer 1940]

✻ An Alternative Weapon

by Pauli Murray and Henry Babcock

(As death tightens her strangle-hold upon the world, the necessity grows in each of us to find a purpose for our living and our dying. Some fall with ease, some with questioning minds and troubled hearts, into the accepted rhythm of killing whom they can first, dying when they must. A few are finding that, whenever and however they die, they cannot have a part in the killing. In the following article Pauli Murray and Henry Babcock express clearly, courageously, sincerely, searchingly the pacifist's philosophy as it works itself out anew in the minds and hearts of young people today. Particularly interesting is the author's suggestion that non-violence, born in the East, may find its surest foothold in the West among those in our land who have suffered most from violence. Miss Murray, reared in Durham, N. C., law student at Howard University, is special field secretary for the Workers Defense League and chairman of the Annual Student Conference of the NAACP. Mr. Babcock is church secretary of the Workers Defense League and a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation.) [Original note.]

Upon the shoulders of today's young men and women will fall most heavily the dangers and sacrifices of this war, the problems of the peace settlement and the anxieties and burdens of the post-war period should that settlement fail to meet the world's social, economic and political needs.

Among the many roles which the world's young people are assuming now, the most difficult role of all, in the eyes of the world and of himself, would appear to be that of the pacifist. Whether his convictions arise from Christian training or from simple, human, civilized considerations, he finds himself hard put to it to interpret his goals and to justify his 'act,' his 'character' in this tragic drama of a world professedly warring for liberation.

His dilemma is no easy thing to bear. What kind of role is this

that he now plays in a world at war? What kind of 'character' is this that he tries to interpret to the world audience? Is the philosophy sound? Is it purely visionary? A cloak behind which to hide moral cowardice? What are his goals and how does he intend to reach them? Is it an obstructionist role, as some say? Is it a mere youthful flowering of the weed of isolationist sentiment in our national life? If it is positive and constructive, then how does it propose to bring order out of the chaos of this world 'revolution'?

As we pass through the jungle of human barbarity, where men crawl on the earth like beasts, where men pour hot death from the skies, the pacifist wrestles thus daily with his spirit, seeking some answer to confusion. It is not enough for him to go to prison, to a Conscientious Objector's camp, to accept non-combatant service. . . . He too wants to throw his life into the struggle to win democracy and the Four Freedoms. For the courage which gives him the strength to take the unpopular stand he today takes is a courage that wants to pit itself against the courage of other young men. Yet having rejected armed conflict, what tested weapon can he put forth which will be superior to guns and tanks? What armor of light can he put on to help guide him and his fellowmen through a world in darkness? Even while protesting the military machine, what convincing answer can he hurl back to the bombs on Pearl Harbor, or the torpedoes which send his country's ships to the bottom? What hope can he substitute for the desperate fear of a people which gathers up the best of its youth and feeds it to a man-made dragon? He knows that even this war machine which he decries so loudly nevertheless gives military protection to his own life and to the democracy which has built his life; and guarantees him the constitutional right to raise his voice in protest against it. He knows that such democracy, committed to the dignity of the human being, must be preserved. But at what cost? And by what means?

From the point of view of his own personal emotions, the young pacifist finds his role exacting the extreme of courage and control. Youth is revolutionary, youth is violent in its passions, desires, and ideals. The discipline to reject baser methods as a solution for conflicts does not come easily to the young. It requires constant internal struggle for mastery over the desire

to retaliate against injustice, to force issues, to battle for right by whatever methods. Young people like each other and like to be together. It requires an uncommon serenity to withstand the contempt of one's fellows, to stand aside while one's comrades march on to an honorable death behind one's country's flag. It takes a compassion for all mankind, to withhold the hand that would kill in heroic splendor in protection of one's own loved ones and that which symbolizes home.

For the American Negro pacifist, both the confusion and the courage required to work one's way through it to the way of non-violence are intensified. He has always lived under the crushing heel of racial supremacy—the very evil the United Nations now profess their determination to destroy. He has experienced the feel of this heel, he has felt himself pushed down to a subhuman status, he knows how this force seeks to keep him there. But he is told that if this country suffers military defeat, Hitlerism and its demonic race theory would become the national official policy rather than a sporadic or ingrown sectionalism adhered to by an all too large minority of misguided white Americans. He is told this and he knows that his fate is tied with the fate of democracy and freedom, as fumbling, blind, and stupid as some aspects of that democracy are when applied to him. He knows all these things . . . and knows too that if he openly opposes war as a barbarous institution, his stand will surely be construed as downright rebellion. . . .

Yet he also knows that after he has pulled white supremacy out of the fire, he may be sent back to the race ghettos to starve and despair. He knows that even now, as he is called upon to save democracy, democracy can find *no democratic place* for him in the fight to save it. . . .

It is a strange thing to believe that out of the Negro's struggle and suffering may come the answer to the very problem which troubles so many Americans today, pacifist and non-pacifist. It is strange and incredible to some, and yet there are reasons for this hope:

The Negro has suffered so brutally from hypocrisy that he has a way now of cutting through suave words and phrases to the meaning beneath them. He has learned the 'back way' to quality ideas. He sees plainly that those people in the United States who

support race supremacy belong with Hitler's hordes. He sees that victory for democracy must be won at home just as surely as it must be won abroad. He sees the issue between democracy and fascism to be *less clearly* an issue between nations, more clearly an issue that is internal to every nation. He has been told all of his life—and his fathers were told before him—by his white brothers and by his government, that violence is not the way to go about seeking good ends for himself. He has been told this until he believes it, until it has become for him the social doctrine of intra-national non-violence. And now this social doctrine of intra-national non-violence meets head-on the social doctrine of international violence. And for many Negroes it is not difficult to see this violence as not only the wrong way but the socially ineffective way.

Thus, through his suffering, through the bitter conflicts and frustrations of his personal situation, the Negro is led to a thorough-going pacifism at home and abroad which may prove itself the means of giving the movement in America its greatest impetus. . . .

But what is pacifism? What are the non-violent means whereby the pacifist hopes to save democracy at home and abroad?

We need only to glance at the spectacle of a democracy trying to save and extend itself by changing itself into everything *that it is not*, to acknowledge that new means are needed to bring about good ends. Pacifism holds that democracy stands in grave danger of never being itself again and that its consent to go to war, if not quite suicide, is still a self-inflicted wound more serious than any that an external enemy could inflict. Pacifism believes that the *means must be suited to the ends to be attained and that war is irreconcilably unsuited to the attainment of democracy.*

If, however, pacifism had *no means* of fighting aggression it would be merely a philosophy of pessimism.

Pacifism believes that no foreign totalitarian aggressor can transform into its own likeness a nation with a long democratic tradition which is *determined to preserve* that tradition. Always the aggressors' own armies of occupation are eventually dissolved by the pervasive persistent force of non-violent opposition. The

Roman Legions prevailed over the armies of Palestine and Greece but the Judaic-Christian way of life conquered the Roman way of life; and Greek culture conquered Roman barbarism.

Contrary to the stereotypes which the world holds of him, the pacifist believes *he* is the realist. Having given up a visionary future, he insists upon present performance of good will as the only guarantee that there will be a desirable future. He insists upon looking through the pages of history at the attempts to bring good ends by violence and sees that these attempts have always failed to do what they set out to do.

The pacifist believes that war is self-defeating and only active good will can succeed in human relationships. He feels therefore that he has a special function: he must be the active agent in the building up of the new society within the declining old. The whole history of evolution in the animal world shows that progress depends upon this process . . . the formation and development of a new and higher level of life by a group, living more or less apart from and yet within the framework of the old. Human history is now at one of these stages. Roman history at the dawn of the Christian religion exemplifies another; for at the height of Roman barbarism, a new society based upon democracy and human fellowship was being instigated by the early Christian communities, later to take shape during the Dark Ages, to be finally the precursor of democracy.

The whole theory of pacifism is essentially religious (though of a rationality that is based on the very fundamentals of human behavior) in that it operates by and requires faith—faith in the dynamic creativeness of intelligent good will, faith—and imagination—in its ability to solve problems whose complete solution can not be seen in advance. It is religious in that it recognizes a force more powerful and creative than brute force; in that it seeks *conversion* to democracy and freedom rather than its imposition at the point of the bayonet. It is religious in that it is revolutionary. For only the religious man demands a complete change in internal attitudes as well as in external conditions. It is religious because it demands of the individual an internal discipline and a *controlled* individualism; because it is incurably social as it seeks to develop an ever wider group-conscience. It

is religious in that it demands a "society within a society" for such is the nature of every true fellowship.

When pacifism is positive and outgoing there is not so wide a gulf between the sincere peace-loving liberal who has accepted the war and the convinced pacifist. Both groups admittedly hate war; the former has accepted it as the 'lesser of two evils.' They contend that we must fight now to save the democracy we have, or accept a complete victory for Hitlerism and a second Dark ages. But what if we don't 'win'? We would then have to turn to alternative weapons. The pacifist suggests that we seek them out and perfect them now for we shall need them—in victory, or in defeat.

Harry Emerson Fosdick recently stated:

"We are social revolutionists, convinced that a new era lies ahead, in which war will be recognized for what it is: an outmoded anachronism, an insane stupidity, the barbaric breeder of all the other worst ills that humanity suffers. . . . And for ourselves, without doubting the equal conscientiousness of our non-pacifist brethren, we feel a constraining vocation, which we cannot deny, to begin now living on the principles of that new era, and illustrating them as best we know how in our lives."

Vera Brittain, reporting for the British pacifist movement, says:

" . . . the more modern type of pacifist believes that the old system under which the civilization of the past is dying can never be satisfactorily revived, and that the present situation demands a creative type of social revolution. . . . The British pacifist movement of the nineteen-forties is a revolution, though bloodless; it is a society within a society. Refusing to accept the moral standards that have led mankind to catastrophe and suffering on a scale never paralleled in human history, it upholds another series of values to which it strives to adhere in the confident belief that these would mean the end of international strife." (italics ours.)

Because the pacifist takes his stand against violent warfare, he, if he pursues a positive program of reconciliation, cannot under any circumstances be mistaken for an isolationist. And, though he may refuse to take part in the armed conflict, he is not an obstructionist because he does not seek to impose his pacifism upon his government and his countrymen. He recognizes that the

majority of the people have been committed to the war effort through their elected representatives. He would substitute international good will and fellowship for brutal mutual destruction, and, without wasting time in blame for past diplomatic and political failures, set out at once to demonstrate alternative weapons of non-violence and non-cooperation. Having perfected these weapons he can offer them to the world in confidence that they will be effective.

The pacifist has an excellent opportunity to demonstrate his alternative weapon through its conscious use in the defense and extension of democracy in the United States. Here both the pacifist and non-pacifist can agree that democracy must strengthen its inner defenses, that we must weed out those characteristics in our own land which send us into the world arena with dirty hands. They can agree that this self-purging must be done by non-violent means.

Without compromising his principles of human freedom, the pacifist must use every instrument of good will and the power of truth to eliminate barriers to universal enfranchisement, so that we may have a truly representative government. He must not let his countrymen forget for one moment that democracy must provide full and equal opportunity for advancement and justice for all—particularly sharecroppers, domestic workers, migratory workers, Negroes, Jews, Orientals, and other neglected groups in our midst. There must be no second-class citizenship in our land. He must actively protect the rights of labor and our democratic liberties. He must be on guard to protect the rights of American citizens in America as a first line of defense, whether they be of Japanese or African origin, and must realize that the present tragic evacuation of Japanese Americans from the West Coast has resulted from the weakness rather than the strength of our democratic processes. He must help find some way of renewing the faith of these people in our constitutional guarantees to all citizens.

He must concretize his faith and offer step-by-step techniques to make it something beyond a beautiful credo. He must always and everywhere appeal to American youth that it take counsel with its own soul and make sure it is not offering up its life upon the altar of history in vain. [Winter 1942-43]

✿ Words on a Bus

by *Sterling A. Brown*

The first one who got on was a little girl with a market bag half as large as she; then came a sturdy urchin, rubbing his eyes, pushed along by his young small mother, carrying bundles and a sleeping baby. An old man, having told the driver he was just helping his daughter with her things, started stowing away a big suitcase. Fortunately the couple behind me got off at Fayette and a seat was vacant.

As this family entered, one of the wits in the Caucasian front of the bus had said "Eeny-meeny-miney-mo!" Some of his mates tittered. He even looked back to our section for appreciation.

It was not long after the patch of light had left the old man standing there at the culvert that the talk began. Most of us were a little beaten by the jolting and grinding of the bus; many had drowsed off, waking only when the driver clicked the lights on at Lorman, Fayette, the culvert.

Before the lights went off again, however, one man had come up and sat himself on the arm of the chair opposite the mother and her brood. He asked her where she was going. She told him that she was hoping to get off at the bottom of a hill near a gas station and soft-drink place just before the bus got into Natchez itself. The bus-driver, *He*, had told her that he didn't know whether he could let her off there or not, he didn't know the place that she was talking about and that she'd better go on to the Tri-State bus depot in mid-city. But she hoped that she wouldn't have to go there; she didn't want to have to carry all of that luggage and those children all that way. Not with them sleepy and crying. But if she could get off at the foot of the hill, it wasn't nowhere at all from there. Not nowhere, hardly.

The man told her that he knew the place, and promised to pull the string when they got there. "You ain't living where you used to, then?" he asked.

"Who is you?"

"You don't remember me? I remember you."

"Ain't you Amos?"

"Yeah, I'm Amos."

"Lordy, I ain't seed you for so long a time. Well, I declare. No, we moved from the alley. We live up on the hill, behind that big ole house where Mis' Fletcher live. Nowheres hardly from where I git off, do I git off."

"I'll see that you gits off, all right. All these children yours?"

They were that, she bragged proudly. And then followed some talk of the family. But my eavesdropping was stopped by the lights clicking on again, the bus's stopping, and the exit of one of the whites into the engulfing blackness of the Mississippi night.

"How is Lowrie?" was asked, tentatively, I thought.

"Watchu asking me for? I don't know how she is."

"Where is she?"

"I don't know. I mought as well ask you. You know I ain't seed Lowrie for two years."

"You mean she and you ain't livin' together no mo'?"

"She left me a year and two months ago, lacking four days."

"Well, I do declare. I always thought you all were gonna do better than that."

"Warn't no you all. It was her."

"That's what all you men says."

"Hit's the truth. She up and left me."

"Where the children?"

"Wid me. Where'd you expect? For going on two years. No mother in the house."

"What was the matter?"

"I rightly don't know. Lowrie, she disliked it so much down here she kep' on talking about how she wanted to see her people up North. She wanted to go so bad I bought her a ticket and gave her a trip to St. Louis. When she come back, she was mo' dissatisfied than ever. I did all I could for her, made her a good livin'. But she disliked it here.

"But I never knew what was up. Went out to work one morn-ing, came back and found the house empty. She had taken all her clothes and gone. No word, no good-bye nor nothin'."

"What did she do with the children?"

"She had sent them over to my mother's for the day. I went over and got them. They told me that she had been all packed up even while I was eating breakfast. No sooner had I gone than she left too."

"Looks to me that they would have told you."

"She had made 'em promise not to. Said she was coming back soon. Sent me a postcard the first Christmas and some things for the children. That's all I done heard from her for nigh onto two years."

"Well, I declare that's a shame."

"So don't you say you all. It was her."

"Yas. Ain't no kind of mother to leave her children."

"No. But if she wants it that way, she can have it. If she don't think no more of her own flesh and blood than that, I ain't gonna go runnin' after her. Or beggin'."

"Where do they stay?"

"Home with me. They see my mom sometimes in the day. My boy is working; he weigh over a hundred pounds now. The little girl cleans and cooks nigh about as good as ever Lowrie did."

"You ain't got nothin' to worry about. Good riddance."

"Not much. I don't irk my mind thinking about Lowrie. But," the arch whisper came over the back of my chair, "I do git tired sleepin' in the bed all by myself."

"You can git yourself another wife. Never knew you to have trouble findin' a woman."

"I don't know. How you and Tom making it? You still wid Tom?"

"Indeed I is." Laughing embarrassedly, "I loves Tom. He's a good man to me and a good father to my children."

"How many you got? These all?"

"These three and the biggest girl. I left her back in Fayette with her grandma."

"I always thought you was too good for Tom."

"No, indeedy." She laughed gently, a bit coquettishly. "He too good for me."

"Stop that. You the kind of woman wouldn't run away from her husband. Now ain't you? You take care of the house. I know

good and well you wouldn't leave your children behind you in a empty house."

"I'd die before I'd ever leave my children. I just couldn't do that."

"You de kind of woman I needs. I wish I could git me somebody like you. I got me a girl, but she don't seem to take to the children, or to house-keeping. Is Tom doin' all right by you? I didn't think you and him would been together this long."

"He's doing fine by me. Anyway, hit wouldn't do you no good if I wasn't wid him. You know you and I is kin."

"I knows that all right. Yet and still I didn't know, till you tole me, that him and you was still together."

The lights clicked on. Two whites left the bus. The driver craned, looked in his mirror, turned around. "Can't you sit down in the seat and get off the arm," he spoke sharply. Amos slid into the seat. They talked a little more until he pulled the cord for her to get off at the bottom of the hill. I listened no longer; the romance was done for anyhow. [Spring 1943]

‡ Dark Testament⁷

by Pauli Murray

Freedom's a dream, a wanton dream
Haunting as amber wine
Or worlds remembered out of time.
Not Eden's gate but freedom
Lures us down a trail of skulls
Where men ever crush the dreamer,
Not the dream.

I was a Hebrew walking a sea bottom.
I was a Negro slave on night's breast.
I was an Immigrant in ship's steerage.
I was a Mormon searching for a temple.
I was a Refugee on roads to nowhere . . .
Always the dream was the same—
Always the dream was freedom.

America was a new dream and a new world to dream it in.
America was the vast sleeping Gulliver of the globe. America
was the dream of freedom.

The dream was clay in a lowly hand,
The dream was fire in a dreamer's brain,
The dream was a blade in a poet's breast,
Nations are wrought of their dreams and pain,

But the dream was lost
When campfires grew,
The Bible twisted
As rovers threw
The Redskins back

To mountain pass,
The senses dulled
With whiskey flask,
The arrow broken
By white-hot lead.
"Better die now,"
The Red man said,
"Than be a slave
And worse than dead."

The white slave ran away too soon,
Followed the path of dying moon—
A face forgot in frontier shack
Where none asked questions, few turned back.
Here was a place where man could stand
Cupping free earth in eager hand.
Here was a world where freedom's won
By hand on axe, the hand on gun.

And the slavers turned to Africa . . .
The men of Africa were stalwart men,
Tough as hickory, roaming the primal forests.
And their skin was the color of tree-bark—
Bamboo, teakwood, cocoanut, mango.
Their hair was thick with thickness of jungle,
Their eyes were dark as star-fed night.

They were sly and cunning, fearless and cool.
They could repeat the call of bird and beast
With such precision, many a jungle mate
Was fooled by human artistry . . .

Smelters of iron, carvers of ivory,
Hunters of antelope, lion and water-cow,
Followers of honeybird to honeytree,
Warriors of poisoned spear who flung
The deadly dart straight to lion's heart;

Story tellers all, refusing to be hurried
Who nightly by campfires
Poured liquid music into their legends.
And every task no matter what its import
Signalled a tribal song and rhythmic dance.

Their strength in battle tested man for man
And when they killed a man they ate him—
They scorned the trick of futile burning.

O dark savage
Hurl a dark spear of song,
Borne on a night-wind
Piercing the heart sorrow-haunted!

Ours is no bedtime story children beg to hear,
No heroes rode down the night to warn our sleeping villages.

Ours is a tale of blood streaking the Atlantic
from Africa to Barbados,
from Haiti to Massachusetts,
from Rhode Island to Virginia,
from the red clay of Georgia
to the black loam of Mississippi,
from the swamps of Dixie
to the morgues of Detroit.

Ours is a tale of charred and blackened fruit
Abortive harvest dropped from blazing bough,
A tale of eagles exiled from the nest,
Brooding and hovering on the edge of sky—
A somber shadow on this native earth,
Yet no faint tremor of her breast
Eludes the circle of our hungered eye.
Ours is a tale of hunger and of hope
And fear of children on a darkened stair,
Of unnamed hands and voices in the night—
Tongues of forgotten nations clamor here.

Dreams were sweet when tom-toms slumbered,
Dreams were safe on jungle's breast—
With fists of glass and kegs of rum
Bribing black traders, killing the rest.

You slew the dark beater of tom-toms
Tracked us around the jungle's flank,
Caught us dreaming in the moonlight,
Snared us on the river's bank.

Forests trembled as chains clanked louder,
Villages glared with a fiery eye,
The trapped lion roared no less terror
Than man pinned back on a burning sky.

The forest screamed a savage horror,
With one great body the jungle fled,
With one great throat the jungle thundered
And bled new trails of scattered and dead.

Dark hunter, you are now the hunted,
Dark king, the chain is on your back
For they are white with dreams of power,
You're strong and proud—but tell-tale black.

Tethered beneath a slave-ship's girth,
The hours throbbed with moaning of birth,
Foaming and champing in slime and dung,
Rumbling curses in a jungle tongue;

Torturous turning of fettered limb,
Whimpering tots when thirst choked them;
Vomiting milk from curdled breast,
Rats' teeth sinking in suckling's chest.
Slave ships plunging through westbound waves,
Grinding proud men to cringing slaves.

Running slaves is a risky trade
When you cross the path of government sail;
They'll smell you five miles down the wind
For a slaver stinks like a rotting whale.
And when they spy you, dump your cargo,
Shove the first black over the rail . . .

He twists, he spins, clutches at the sun,
Plummets down, dark dagger in the flood,
He sucks in the others one by one,
The foam track crimsons with their blood
As crafty shark fins flash among
The black heads bobbing on the wave—
The slave ship flees—their freedom won
In churning torrent, in bottomless grave.

Oh trade a king's freedom for a barrel of molasses,
Swap a queen's freedom for a red bandanna,
Or Cherokee-mulattoes in North Carolina
Or a Creole mistress in Louisiana.

Sell a man's brain for a handful of greenbacks,
Sell a man's heart for bales of cotton,
Sell a man's wife for pearls and earrings,
Crush a man's soul—brand him shiftless, rotten.

Mark him down in the record with the mules and mortgage
Mark him up in Congress—he's three-fifths human,
Sell him long, sell him short, trade him up and down the river,
Build mansions, build an Empire—cotton is a-boomin'!

We have not forgotten the market square where on a summer morning we stood naked and mute in an alien sun, sold and resold with the selfsame coin our fettered toil had won. A man plucked up from all he ever owned—the slim brown girl who was so brief a wife, brown as sunflowers in late October—torn from the child of their blended flesh to plant slavery's seed in untamed earth.

Driven by whip's relentless tongue
To dance and caper in the sun,
To ripple the muscles from shoulders to hips,
To flex the calves and bulge the biceps,
To feel the shame of a girl whose breast
Is bared to squeeze of breeder's fist.

Oh take a black's manhood and give him a white God,
Send him 'way down in the dismal woods
Where a black man's praying will not embarrass
A white man's juleps and tranquil moods.

But the black man went out in the wilderness
Mourning and brooding over your wrongs,
And walked and talked with the God you gave him,
Fashioned a prayer and ten thousand songs.

A black man down on his knees in the swamp-grass
Sent his prayer straight to the white God's throne,
Built him a faith, built a bridge to your God,
And God gave him hope and the forge of song.

"Way down yonder by myself
I couldn't hear nobody pray . . .

"Sometimes I feel like a motherless child
A long way from home . . .

"Travelin' . . . travelin'
All alone . . .

"Good news! The chariot's comin'
And it aint gonna leave me behin' . . ."

Hope is a crushed stalk
Between clenched fingers.
Hope is a bird's wing
Broken by a stone.
Hope is a word in a tuneless ditty,
A word whispered with the wind,
A dream of forty acres and a mule,
A cabin one's own and rest days often,
A name and place for one's children
And children's children at last . . .
Hope is a song in a weary throat.

Oh give me a song of hope
And a word where I can sing it.
Give me a song of faith
And a people to believe in it.

Give me a song of kindness
And a country where I can live it.
Oh give me song of hope and love
And a brown girl's ear to hear it. .

Pity the poor who hate,
Wild brood of earth's lean seasons,
They never saw stars and had no time for singing
They never knelt on moss searching for cowslips,
Had no Godhead and glimpsed no God walking in the dawn,
They never knew the touch of comrades,
Scoffed at crosses and mole-eyed fled the sun.

Pity the poor, the land-robbed whites,
Driven by planter greed to marshy back-lands,
Driven by fevers, pellagra and hook-worm,
Driven to hate niggers warm in their cabins,
The nigger fed on scraps from the Big House,
The nigger's hands on a fine tall coachwhip,
The half-white nigger in a rich man's kitchen.

Give 'em a chance they'd burn that nigger,
Burn 'im on a tree in the swamp-lands,
Teach 'im not to eat while white men hungered,
Teach 'im that even God was white
And had no time for niggers' praying.
Teach 'im that the devil was black
And niggers are the sons of evil.

But often their anger blew toward the Big House
And planters troubled by fear and gloom
Gave whip and gun and niggers to beat
And bloodhounds to foil impending doom.

Pity the black
In his misery,
Pity his game
Of hypocrisy—
Shouting his pride
As rich man's thrall
Than poor white trash
And starving free,

His double-face talk
For scraps at Big Gate,
Fear in the field
And slow-grinding hate.
Pity slave and serf
Both crying to be free
Forever bound by common fate
To common destiny.

The savage fires burn low—the witch dance is forgotten.
The hard new tongue rolled in the mouth, into spirituals
and jive and small talk and big talk and any talk . . .

Here is the runt
Of America's litter,
Sometimes laughing,
Most times bitter—
This teat-pup burned,
Shot at and spat on,
Yet stumbles and gropes
Toward freedom's sun
And walks with shambling
Strange fierce pride—
A thorn forever
Prickling the side.

The drivers are dead now
But the drivers have sons.
The slaves are dead too
But the slaves have sons,
And when sons of drivers meet sons of slaves
The hate, the old hate keeps grinding on.
Traders still trade in double-talk
Though they've swapped the selling-block
For ghetto and gun!

Pile up the records, sing of pioneers,
Point to images chipped from mountain-heart,
Swagger through history with glib-tongued traditions,
Say of your grass roots, "We are a hard-ribbed people,
One nation indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

Put it all down in a time capsule,
Bury it deep in the heart of Virginia,
Bury slave-song with the Constitution,
Bury it in that vineyard of planters
And poll-taxes, sharecroppers and presidents.
For the same red earth is fed
By the white bones of Tom Jefferson
And the white bones of Odell Waller.
In coffin and outhouse all men are equal.

This is America, dual-brained creature,
This is the monstrous child of freedom,
One hand shoving us down in the gutter,
One hand thrusting us toward the stars.

Hunger and fear pressing on the shoulder,
Hunger and fear darkening the air,
Crumbs for the buffoon, jeers for the angered,
Back door and spittoon, swamptree and chair.

We have walked in your fields, O countrymen!
We have dreamed your dreams and sung your songs,
And given you our dreams and our songs,
But this is our portion, this our testament—

Tear it out of the history books!
Bury it in conspiracies of silence!
Fight many wars to suppress it!
But it is written on our faces
Thirteen million times over!
It sings in our blood,
It cries from the housetops,
It mourns with the wind in the cedars,
When dogs howl and will not be comforted,
When newborn lambs bleat in the snowdrifts,
And dead leaves rattle in the graveyards.

And we'll shout it from the mountains,
We'll tell it in the valleys,
We'll talk it in miner's shack,
We'll sing it at the tool bench,

We'll whisper it over back fences,
We'll speak it in the kitchen,
We'll state it at the White House,
We'll tell it everywhere to all who will listen—

We will lay siege, let thunder serve our claim,
For it must be told, endlessly told, and you must hear it.

Listen, white brothers, hear the dirge of history,
Hear the soul of your brother piercing the long night
And hold out your hand—hold out your hand.

Let none say of us who darkly stand
Bared to the spittle of every curse,
Nor left the dignity of beasts.
“These were not men but cowards all,
With eyes dull-lidded as a frog’s.
They labored long but not from love,
They strove from blind perpetual fear.”

Better our seed rot on the ground
And our hearts burn to ash
Than years be empty of our imprint.

We have no other dream, no land but this.
With slow deliberate hands these years
Have set her image on our brows.
We are her seed, have borne a fruit
Native and pure as unblemished cotton.

Then let the dream linger on,
Let it be the test of nations,
Let it be the quest of all our days,
The fevered pounding of our blood,
The measure of our souls,—
That none shall rest in any land
And none return to dreamless sleep,
No heart be quieted, no tongue be stilled
Until the final man
May stand in any place
Friend and brother to every other man,
Thrust his shoulders to the sky,

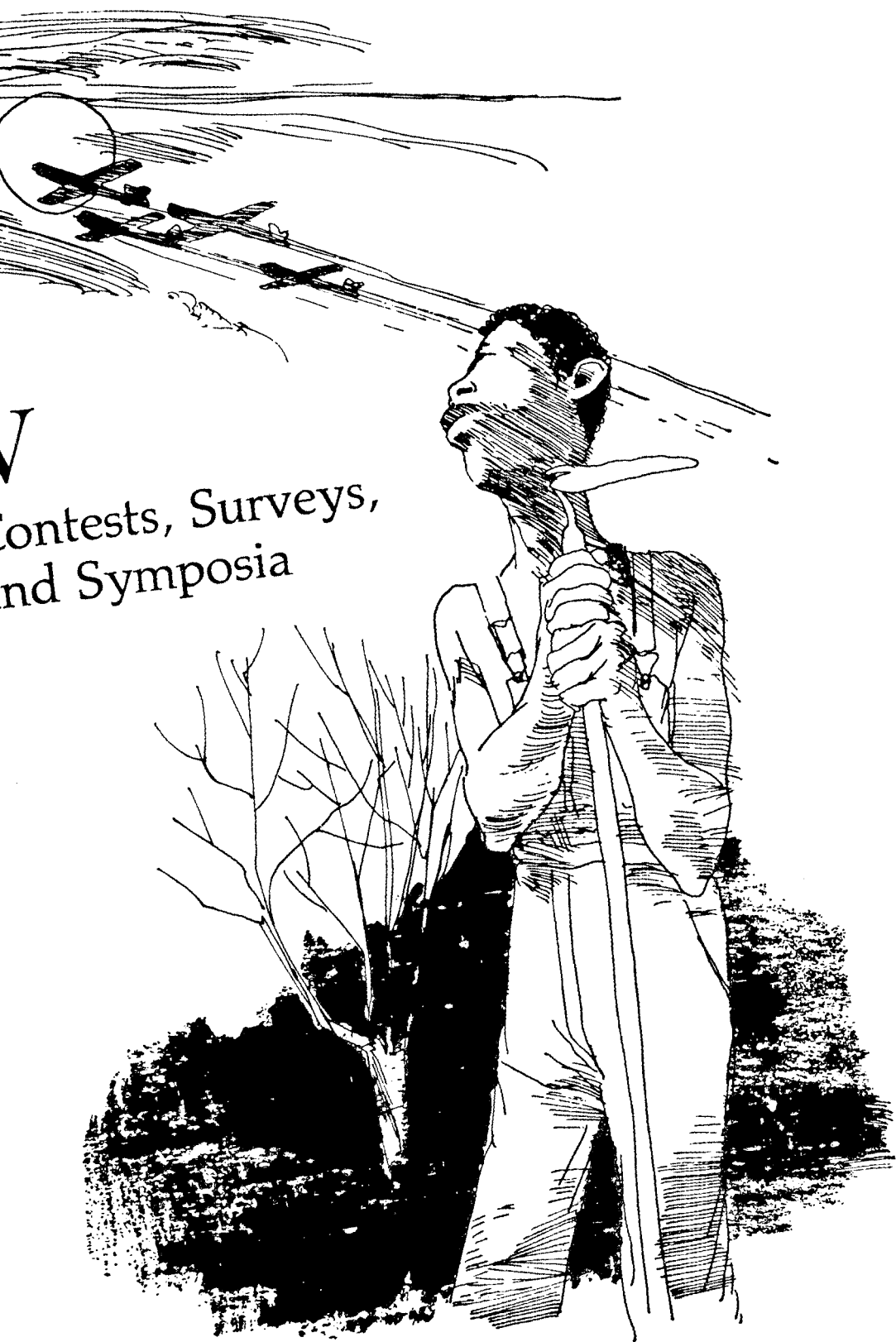
A thousand dawns of freedom in his eye.
And God will smile at last and say,
"Once I made a world and now—
I have made a man."

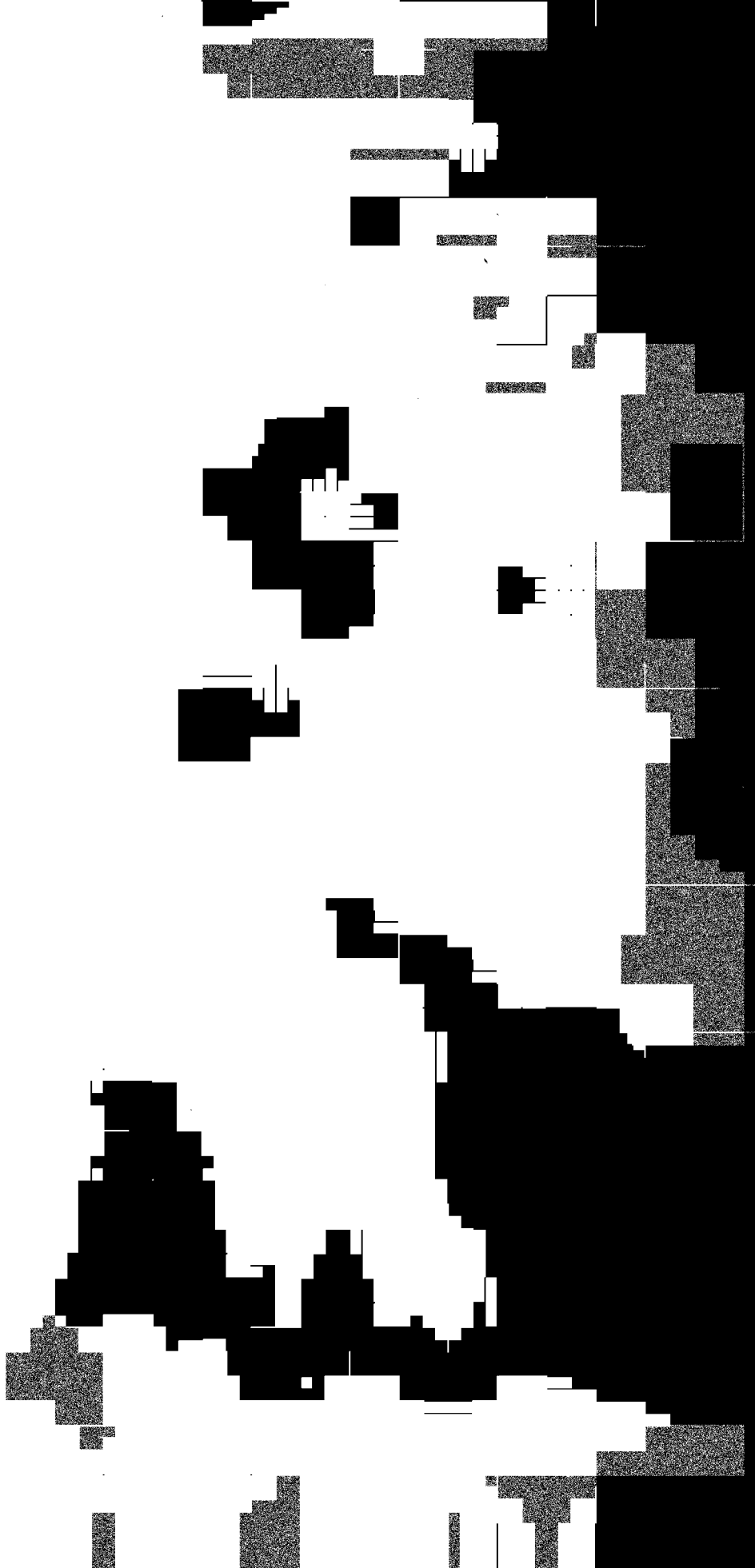
[Winter 1944-45]

NOTES

1. This article was a pre-publication excerpt from Cash's *The Mind of the South*, which was not published until 1941.
2. Mr. Allen's article was one of three comments on Davidson's book; the others were by Hortense Powdermaker and Paula Snelling.
3. *Purslane*, published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1939, was reprinted by Putnam in 1941 under the title *Pates Siding*.
4. This article was a pre-publication excerpt from the authors' *Sharecroppers All*, which the University of North Carolina Press published in 1941.
5. "The Moving" was incorporated into the author's book *On Troublesome Creek*, published by The Viking Press in 1941.
6. This lyric was included in the author's volume *Ballad of the Bones*, published by E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., in 1945.
7. We reprint the original published version of "Dark Testament" as it appeared in *South Today*. It was subsequently revised. The final version appears in Pauli Murray, *Dark Testament and Other Poems*, Norwalk, Conn.: Silvermine Publishers, Inc., 1970.

W
Contests, Surveys,
and Symposia





Contests, Surveys, and Symposia

LILLIAN SMITH and PAULA SNELLING devised a number of ingenious ways of getting at Southern opinion and of presenting it in an effective style. During the spring and summer of 1936, while still thinking of their magazine as almost exclusively literary, they attempted to find out what books were being read in the region by sending questionnaires to selected librarians and booksellers. Lillian Smith summarized the results in her column "Dope with Lime" in the number for Fall 1936. By that time, the editors had decided to make the exploration of opinion serve the further purpose of producing contributions to the magazine; and they announced in the Winter 1936 number their first prize essay contest, the terms of which and the editors' comment on the results are given below.

In the number for Fall 1937, they announced another contest, offering prizes of \$75 "for the most interesting essay on regional planning" and of \$50 "for the most interesting critical essay on a contemporary southern writer." This was followed in the Spring 1939 number by the offer of a \$50 prize for an article "on the causes of war with special reference to the current controversy in Europe," the terms of which are excerpted below from the editorial, signed by Lillian Smith, "Mr. Lafayette, Heah We Is—."

With this contest, the editors introduced a method of presenting the results which they used in several subsequent contests as well. They constructed a "symposium" by providing introductory comment followed by excerpts from the essays they received. They did this in part because they were generally disappointed in the quality of the essays yet recognized that they contained nuggets of opinion which were worth panning out. They thus compensated for the loss of well-made essays which might have given the magazine literary quality by presenting considerably broader samples of opinion than would have been possible if they had printed whole essays, as may

be seen from the excerpts from their "Symposium on War" below. The magazine gained the character of a forum in which the participants were sometimes unknown or anonymous but sometimes distinguished, depending on whether the editors selected contestants. The results of their questionnaire "How Can Intelligent Southerners Best Help Their South?" from the Winter 1941 number, which are excerpted below, exemplify their approaches to prominent respondents.

In the meantime, the editors, who all along had used the contests and surveys to educate themselves, received the travel grants from the Rosenwald Foundation which enabled them to add a great deal of direct personal interviewing and investigation to their study of the region. The effects pervaded the magazine but were most explicit in the sketches by Lillian Smith entitled "So You're Seeing the South" which appeared in the number for Winter 1939-1940. She meant to make a series of them. It is regrettable that she never did, for in these vignettes she used the methods of subjective reportage, since so widely employed, which both she and Paula Snelling conceived as adding a desirable dimension to fact-finding, whether in the standard journalistic manner or in that of social scientists.

The most painstakingly conceived of their surveys and symposia was too bulky for inclusion or effective excerpting in an anthology, but since it was one of the most characteristic things they did we will at least describe it here and reprint below the editors' announcement and their introduction to the results. They offered a prize of \$250 for the best set of answers to 100 questions about the South under the title "Do You Know Your South?" This contest was announced in the number for Fall 1939, and the results were given in the Winter 1941 number. The judges were Tarleton Collier, Atlanta newspaperman and novelist; John Temple Graves, II, Birmingham newspaper columnist; Arthur Raper, author of several books on the South, notably *The Tragedy of Lynching* and with Ira DeA. Reid, *Sharecroppers All*; and Rupert Vance, author of *The Human Geography of the South* and member of the Department of Sociology at the University of North Carolina.

The questionnaire filled a pamphlet since many of the items were subdivided or carried explanation and instructions by

the editors. The response was voluminous, for people all over the region enjoyed the questions, taking them as an enlightening game. Since it was not possible to construct a symposium by excerpting responses in a meaningful way, the editors answered all of the questions themselves in an 85-page supplement entitled "Across the South Today" in the Winter 1941 number. We refer readers to this as an extraordinarily vivid album of snapshots, taken with a wide lens, of the South at that date, which incidentally serves as an inventory of the editors' views and as an indication of the tone and scope of their magazine as it ultimately developed.

The complete list of contests, surveys, and symposia is as follows: survey of Southern libraries and bookshops (Fall 1936); essay contest on a variety of Southern topics (Winter 1936); essay contests on regional planning and on criticism of Southern writers (Fall 1937); essay contest on the causes of war (Spring 1939); questionnaire contest "Do You Know Your South?" and an essay contest for Southern college students on "How Can We Achieve Democracy in the South?" (Fall 1939); questionnaire on democracy (Fall 1939); questionnaire on how the draft fitted in with the conception of democracy (Winter 1939); inquiry into opinion on America's entering World War II (Spring 1940); survey of youth opinion and generational conflict related to war (Winter 1940-1941); questionnaire "How Can Intelligent Southerners Best Help Their South?" (Winter 1941); questionnaire "Winning the World with Democracy"—an effort to inspire thinking about designing the peace (Spring 1942); survey of views of young soldiers (Winter 1942-1943); and a survey of opinion among ministers concerning social policy after the war (Winter 1944-1945).

✻ Prize Contest

Announcement

In order to acquaint ourselves more completely with "the mind of the South," to encourage verbalization of certain of our problems, to add variety to our contributions, to bring the magazine to the attention of new groups, we announce the following prize contests, closing May 1st, 1937.

1. \$50.00. 1000 to 3000 words. Open to everybody. For the most interesting manuscript submitted on any of the following subjects:

(a) An essay on any economic, social, religious, or literary theme of concern to the South today.

(b) A sketch of a notable, typical, or uniquely interesting southern personality.

(c) An article on the United States Constitution and Liberalism.

2. \$25.00. Up to 2000 words. Open to the members of any Writers' Club which subscribes to *Pseudopodia*. For the most interesting poem or story or essay submitted.

3. \$25.00. 1000 to 2000 words. Open to the members of any women's organization (Junior League, Parent-Teachers Association, etc.) which subscribes to *Pseudopodia*. For the most interesting article on: My Responsibilities as a Mother in Regard to the Emotional Needs of My Child.

4. \$15.00. 1000 to 2000 words. Open to any student in a college whose library, or any club, subscribes to *Pseudopodia*. For the most interesting manuscript submitted on any of the following subjects:

(a) A critical essay appraising the works of a living southern writer.

(b) A formulation of the primary problems which the United States must face in the next ten years.

(c) What My Years at College Have Meant to Me.

(d) The Part I Hope to Play in the Next War.

(e) A sketch or story of a Negro.

5. \$10.00. 600 to 1500 words. Open to any student of a high school whose library, or any club, subscribes to *Pseudopodia*. For the most interesting manuscript submitted on any of the following subjects:

- (a) A statement of the problems of tenant farming.
- (b) A statement of the political theories of Communism, Fascism and Liberalism.
- (c) The Rise and Fall of the Spirit of Liberalism in the South before 1840.
- (d) A sketch of some person or group in the writer's home town.
- (e) Our Parents. (A frank discussion from the view-point of those most vitally concerned, of the misunderstandings and difficulties of the parent-son or parent-daughter relationship.)

We can return manuscripts only if they are accompanied by envelope with sufficient return postage.

We reserve the right to withhold awards in any group if no manuscript of sufficient interest and excellence is received.

[Winter 1936]

Prize Contest

[An Editorial]

The *Review's* first contest, which closed in May, was interesting to the editors. We, still cherishing the perhaps pathetic fallacy that what is interesting to us will be interesting to enough other people in the world that our printer's bill can eventually be paid, proceed to relay its gist.

Though many of the newspapers, etc., to which we sent notices were of the opinion that there is no news-value in another flea trying to bite the dog, there were a few who felt that the type of flea should be taken into consideration. So the existence of the magazine and a conception (or a misconception) of the kind of material it wants was made known to several hundred people who otherwise would have gone to their graves in ignorance.

The vast majority of manuscripts submitted were for group one, causing close competition there and little to choose from elsewhere. Whether because bigger ponds are more alluring to frogs

of all sizes, or whether the ante required in the other groups was too high, we do not know.

The virtues which the judges esteem were sought in the content, the style, the viewpoint of the papers which came to us. They were found with fair frequency in the first, on occasion in the second, very rarely in the third. That is, many of the articles presented an array of facts which were potentially interesting; some of them disclosed native or acquired skill in writing; considerably fewer gave evidence of having taken their root from a spirit immune to class prejudices, and possessing that wisdom which goes beyond erudition.

The \$50.00 prize in group one was awarded to Silas Bent for his essay on *Liberalism and the Constitution*, which was in our Spring issue. Honorable mention in this group was given to Morrison Colladay's *Apologia of a Dictator* (see page three) and to Mary Everett, whose essay concerning *Southern Regions* (discussed from an angle different from that used by other reviewers of this book) will be in the Fall issue. In group three, the \$25.00 award went to Helen Dick Davis, whose *Truth-ridden Mothers* will appear in the Fall. Prizes were not given in the other groups, since none of the manuscripts submitted in them seemed quite what the *Review* and its readers are most interested in. We have, however, asked permission to use in later issues another article or two which were entered in group one. [Summer 1937]

✻ [Essay Contest on Causes of War]

"Mr. Lafayette, Heah We Is—"¹

[An Editorial by Lillian Smith]

A prize of \$50.00 is offered by *The North Georgia Review* for the most interesting article on the causes of war with special reference to the current controversy in Europe. The only restriction is that the war cries "democracy" and "fascism" not be used. Since the process of tracking war back to its hole is likely to lead up and down the main roads of civilization and into paths weaving through a briar patch or two back to man's kitchen and his cradle, the Editors feel compelled to limit the mileage to 6 pages of the *Review* (approximately 3,500 words).

The Editors also, while agreeing that war is a serious business, would be delightfully surprised to receive a few manuscripts of less solemn mien than those one habitually reads—and writes.

Though the day may come when an increasing war spirit will require of American women heroic Lysistratan measures if another débâcle be averted, there are at present available less rigorous remedies; and of these 'simples' the Editors wish a few women would speak in their own terms. The man who nearly 2,500 years ago said, "Nay, never play the brave man, else when you go back home you own mother won't know you" understood well the canny realism of the female. And though the old playwright had his tongue in his cheek when he cried "... the very sheet-anchors of our salvation may be those yellow tunics, those scents and slippers, those cosmetics and transparent robes," his words could prove themselves a literal truth in this year of 1939. It is because women have fewer illusions about human nature than men, are less in their souls romantic, and hold more lightly to ideals, that in matters of war and peace they may possibly be more clear-eyed. This is a mere conjecture—and one that seems partially invalidated at the outset by woman's notorious myopia of character and mind. But perhaps because of this very foreshortening of interest and vision she may stumble on a solution right under her nose and thus play a very interesting if belated role in world history. Regardless of these delusions of female grandeur with which this editor is momentarily beguiled, we in all seriousness

hope that women will submit articles in this contest. For undaunted by their well-known weaknesses, undiscouraged even by the spectacle of Dorothy Thompson brandishing her hard-boiled idealism just like any romantic male, and Mrs. Roosevelt growing more hesitant as she draws near the cross-roads, we still look hopefully in the direction of woman for a recipe for peace. (In the midst of our peroration we pause to mention that the contest closes on June 25, 1939.)

Though scared by it, one cannot but admire the amazing foreign-missionary zeal of the proselytizers of the Democratic Religion who are so anxious for us to give your bodies and our souls to spread the gospel in heathen Europe. "Go ye into all the world" they cry and their eyes shine with a light never on land or sea but often on the brows of those who habitually focus on far-seeing places. It would be a shabby trick to distract their attention, to dash the dew from their illusions by muttering about the need for home work. And so (becoming a little fired by their evangelical enthusiasm ourselves), we suggest that we send our grimy home work to Europe. We suggest that we contribute toward the foreign mission fund—little mite-boxes as it were—all the lives that are a blotch on our fair democracy, all the human beings who persist in casting their shadows on our gleaming purity: the sharecroppers, the unemployed, the slum-dwellers, the undernourished, and the Negroes. That would be a fair-sized 'bit.' And it should not be difficult to persuade them (remembering how readily propaganda turns all tricks), a sacrifice themselves in order to make democracy safe for the rest of us. A simple solution, and one possessing a logic that should commend it to the proselytizers. We'd send the Negroes as our shock troops, since they have the longest and most persistent record of being splotches. They could go, calling out in their deep mellow voices: "Mister Lafayette, heah we come! Leastways, all of us cept the 5,000 or so who was lynched a while back. Mr. Lafayette, heah we is. They don't call us mister back home and they don't let us ride in their railroad cars or eat at their tables or sleep in their hotels or let us vote;—and they gives us what scraps are lef as to jobs and we knows to say 'thankee Boss.' And we take what's lef over in the way of schools and hospitals and houses and sewer systems and sech liddle things like that, and tips our hats. But we

live in Gawd's country en that's a fact, en it's a fine place to live in ef yo knows yo place, and we knows our place, yeah Lawd! Now we'se come to lay down our lives for those Jews Mister Hitler's been pickin on. We hear tell he takes their property and their money and kicks them about and spits on 'em and burns their books. An' all that makes our democratic blood about boil over. Yas suh! For hit sho must be terrible to live in a country whar yo has yo money tuk (our ways a lot better cause we has no money to be tuk—jus a little furnish which is et up and gone fo yo can say scat) and it sho must be awful sight to have yo books burned—hit's a lot better never to learn how to read and write like us, we'se tellin you. And to be spit at in the face! That just shows the awful wickedness of that fascism business. Now in our country things are worked out mighty well, a sight better'n that. Theah's plenty of back streets to walk on in every town and back doors what you can go in and out of. And theah's always the Quarters. Yo don need to scrouge up close to folks, close enough for 'em to spit at yo! You kin always step off the sidewalk. And if worse comes to worst you kin run yo tail off and make it to the Swamp. Yeah Lawd . . . there ain't nothin so plumb democratic as a good cypress swamp. . . . Ef them Jews had a jes had a coupla cypress swamps it'd sho helped them get rid of fascism. Yeah man. . . ." [Spring 1939]

Symposium on War

The prize contest announced in the last issue of the *Review* brought so wide, so intelligent and so diverse a response as to persuade the editors that their readers will be interested in a digest and a sampling of the manuscripts submitted. There is every indication that people throughout the land are thinking seriously on the subject of war and that their thoughts are not as yet confined to the more standardized grooves;—at least, that they were not when these essays were written, prior to the setting in motion of steam-rollers which took place this fall. We believe that a reading of these carefully-thought-out opinions which were put on paper just before the outbreak of uncamouflaged war in Europe, will serve as aid in keeping us rational now that the crisis is upon us.

The prize-winning essay and two others which received hon-

orable mention are to be found elsewhere in this issue. Excerpts from many other essays are given at the end of this article. We believe you will be interested also in a summary of the opinions expressed in the manuscripts submitted.

Essays came to us from all sections of the country—perhaps half of them from states outside the South. There seemed little difference, which could be correlated with geography, in the quality of these essays. Rural and urban sections, eastern and southern and western, each sent its portion of un-illusioned and cogent analyses. True, from the South came also a disproportionate quantity of not-too-literate papers attributing the world's dilemmas to the workings of the Devil; which may or may not be due to the fact that the notice of the contest came to southerners through many channels whereas it was brought to the attention, in other sections, only of those who read the *New Republic*, the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun* and the *North Georgia Review*.

About one-third of the essays submitted were from women. And these were, in the main, less preoccupied with the metaphysics of war, more concerned with the loss of human life war entails;—perhaps because the mechanics of creating and cradling human life devolve with disproportionate heaviness upon the female, leaving the male with such advantages or disadvantages of perspective as accrue to a sex to which Antaeus could belong.

Few of the contestants attributed war to a single cause or to a simple cause. But most of them felt that a solution of the problem is imperative and will tax the mind and soul and energy of the entire race. A hopefully recurrent theme was the realization that the problems of this complex era cannot be solved without recourse to mechanisms the evolving of which was not imperative for other generations but is essential for civilization's survival now. Another concept which appeared more frequently than we had anticipated was that of the inadequacy of our sterile and regimented peace; a peace which the world has not yet had the imagination to make creative and satisfying to deep-lying human needs, and which is at present the only alternative to war.

Perhaps a tabulation of the causes of war as they were laid down by our contestants will be of interest. They were, in the order of their frequency: 1) economic pressures and maladjust-

ments; 2) greed and selfishness; 3) intolerance and ignorance; 4) lust for power; 5) nationalism; 6) turning away from God; 7) hate; 8) inadequate facilities for peace; 9) propaganda; 10) racial antagonism; 11) religion; 12) munition makers; 13) desire of leaders to distract people from unrest within the country itself; 14) desire to preserve the status quo; 15) oppression; 16) the inadequacy of peace to supply man's needs; 17) fear; 18) uncontrolled emotions; 19) a feeling of guilt, and the compulsion to project this guilt upon others.

There were many other theses presented with less unanimity; theories that would require more elaboration than space here permits. These essays leave us with the feeling that, though America may embroil herself in another world war, blinders will not this time be so universally a part of the regulation uniform as they have been in the past.

Excerpts from some of the more interesting essays follow. There were dozens of other papers from which we could also quote with pleasure, were the space available.

Reynold Quinn Shotts, Rabun Gap, Ga. "Economic rivalries among men and nations usually serve as the food on which hates, prejudices, and intrigues grow. Here we have the meat upon which our modern Caesars do feed, that they have grown so great."

Fred Schunk, Scranton, Penna. "Too much mystery has been made about the cause of strife when the reason is a simple one. We go to war simply because we find peace an almost intolerable condition, driving to despair while war revives." . . . "In these figures (statistics showing that suicides are more numerous in peace time than in war) you have the reason for the frequency of war. The munitions baron, the war-crazed jingoist, the imperialistic duce, the megalomaniacal fuhrer, are not primarily to blame. They aren't very nice creatures, to be sure, standing in the same relation to war as a procurer does to love, but fundamentally they are of no importance." . . .

Mrs. T. M. Stubbs, Atlanta, Ga. "But for America war is not close enough to cause active concern. Our physical isolation has made it a topic for discussion rather than for sheer panic that has recently existed abroad. But because we do not feel the imminence of armed invaders, we are lulled into a false security, ignoring the

real and numerous wars that are being waged or are smouldering within our own borders this very minute. Strikes, lock-outs, hunger marches, cut-throat competition, unemployment, all have the same elements in them that make nations take up arms against each other, the same distrust, despair, demand, and hate. . . . These are the wars that should shake our apathy and make us seek a plan for immediate action. These are the conflicts made possible by our indifference and indulgence."

Mrs. L. D. Jolly, Decatur, Ga. "Suppose one boy says 'I prefer not to go.' What happens? He is laughed to scorn, and ridicule is one thing the human being cannot stand. Death is far preferable. (At least he thinks so, not knowing death.) But to pit one individual's judgment against the judgment of the whole? Folly in the extreme. So he shouldered his musket, goose-steps with the herd, ducks his head, dives in, and prays God for the best. . . ."

William Edward Zeuch, Oklahoma City, Okla. "Once the war making powers in any nation decide they want to aggress it is relatively easy to whip up a war psychology through press, pulpit, movies, schools and other agencies. The last war demonstrated conclusively that editors, preachers, priests, professors and other publicists, with few honorable exceptions are pushovers to the war mongers."

Robert L. Callum, Jr., Norman Park, Ga. "We of the modern world can learn much from the downfall of ancient forms of civilization. They were practically perfect in their form of civilization except for one thing: they had no method by which they could enjoy the results of their labors."

Rhoda Levett, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. "When the peoples of the world fight against ignorance of each other's desires and fears, and learn that under the barrier of language and hate, lie human longings like their own, it will be a step in the right direction. . . . The hates and desires of the few could never gain credence if mankind as a whole was educated to the truth of what causes war, and the total collapse to his hope of security which follows it."

Edward Ford, Jr., Chatham, N. J. "Rulers so minded can rouse the passions of the people as deftly as the conductor's baton brings the volume of an orchestra to a deafening crescendo. . . . Every western nation has in the Sino-Japanese war suffered in-

dignities that would have led to war if they had coincided with the plans of their rulers. The loss of a contraband-carrying merchantman can be an affront only if the country's rulers wish it accepted as such. The people have not learned to place their own construction on international incidents."

Elaine Ward Cogswell, Chapel Hill, N. C. "Human nature does not change? Those believe it in whom courage and patience ebb low, and on whom a sense of time presses too distractingly. But the strongest builders of the race seem to have been more generally acquainted with steadfastness than with haste. And the larger the project the greater their faith. This is a large project of which we speak, this one of making a tolerant, arbitrating animal out of a bloodthirsty one, of reducing our worst evil to assimilable quantities. It requires time; time and a hint of the meaning attached to peace, that inner compulsion or true longing of which Goethe spoke, 'which is always productive, and which fashions a new and better self'; and outer compulsion, too, which is put upon man to alter himself in conformity with nature which he himself has altered."

Alexander F. Bergman, Bronx, N. Y. "I believe that the causes of war are the result of economic injustice, chaos, of ignorance and the present unequal political and economic levels between countries and classes. I do not believe that the causes of war are to be found in the nature of mankind. I believe that if the causes of war were removed no reasons on earth could induce men to go to war. As long as there is a people without freedom, as long as there is oppression, in any part of the world, there will be war. And as long as one class is in position to exploit another, war will come. I believe it is possible to build a society without oppression and exploitation."

Clarence Cox, Baltimore, Md. "Regardless of the suffering, the poverty of the masses, the devastation of the terrain or what not, the real people behind the war profit, and so does the next generation. The thousands of men who never come back mean jobs for others. Property destroyed must be rebuilt. Somebody benefits." . . .

Rogers Winter, Jr., Atlanta, Ga. "When the machinery for unhampered exchange breaks down, or is non-existent, then war is not far behind . . . When people are ignorant, war is not far

behind. . . . When people are starving, war is not far behind. . . . War is caused by want—real or imaginary want—physical want or spiritual want. There is enough iron, coal, oil, wheat, cotton, honor, what-have-you to go around. Where is the machinery for exchange?"

George B. Tindall, Greenville, S. C. "To most it is profitable to stay out of war, but there *are* those who profit by it, and they cannot be ignored. They are the munitions manufacturers, a group that is actually more international than labor, but not for the promotion of international understanding—war is too profitable. . . . Their main object is to keep the world in a continual state of nerves, to impress governments with the necessity of maintaining armaments for defense against 'aggressors.' Adolf Hitler was made to order for this purpose, and, therefore, was helped to power by the armament makers of Europe. Back in the war of 1914–1918, the industrialists of France and Germany had an agreement not to bomb each other's plants; the most notorious example was in the mineral deposits of the Briey sector; they were in easy reach of the French, but French aviators were forbidden to bomb these de Wendel holdings in spite of the fact that Germany would have collapsed much sooner without them."

Silas Bent, Old Greenwich, Conn. "In the recurrent busts which follow our booms, when the army of the dis-employed multiplies and starvation must be fended off for some of them by establishing relief rolls and civilian concentration camps, there is bound to be, in the back of the executive head, the unconscious or unacknowledged thought that these millions might better be bearing arms. How much more honorable, how much more inspiring, to engage in mass murder than to write pedestrian state guides and build public works! Moreover, on the battlefields a lot of these encumbrances on the body politic could be plowed under . . . this would fit precisely into an economy of scarcity."

May Frank Duffey, Atlanta, Ga. "Men out to punish themselves or their fellows do not use reason but they use rationalisations. Why do men want to punish poor men in a war? Because they hate poor men as all souls hate inferiority in people with whom they deal. They hate inferior men because if they do not grow rich they will be inferior men and if they do grow rich they are still inferior with guilt."

Robert H. Hart, *Atlanta, Ga.* "As fast as any concrete charge is made against Germany, Italy, or Russia, we should match it with ten facts of what we personally bump up against or read about in America, England, France."

Victor Yarros, *Chicago, Ill.* "Professor John Dewey has pointed out that among the major causes of war is the idea of national sovereignty—an idea, he has said, which is equivalent to that of international anarchy." . . . "The causes of war are rooted in our imperfectly socialized nature. . . . In international relations, the very idea of law and order is rather new. But it is a sound and realizable idea, provided we patiently ascertain and remove the major causes of war."

Milton Bernard, *Dorchester, Mass.* "But nations are themselves only a mystic entity which is actually a number of individuals. History books tell of battles between countries, but cemeteries tell individual tales 'of crosses row on row.'" . . . "No country can go to war unless its citizenry are willing to fight, to kill and to be killed."

Tom Herndon, *Carrollton, Ga.* "In our opinion, a layman's viewpoint on this question would never have been asked for had the editors of this magazine believed that human nature, psychology, and emotion had nothing to do with the causes of war. . . . It cannot be denied that war has a strong psychological attraction. War means far more than horror and bloodshed; it contains the promise of gratification to desires and impulses which lie deep in the personality of man."

James Finucane, *Chester, Pa.* "We have war because we consider our nation too good and other nations too bad. We have war because we try to run world politics on a cave-man basis. We have war because we have the ethics of troglodytes in our hearts and machine-gun triggers in our hands. We have war because we are ignorant, selfish and ill-informed, because we fail to realize that a nation is an unverifiable hypothesis, a line postulated to a point, a gigantic myth, contrived on ethnical, geographical or cultural pretexts, for reasons of political, economic and military expediency. We have war for lack of emotional hygiene. We have war because, in spite of our scientific and technical advances, we still grope in moral darkness." [Fall 1939]

‡ Dialing the South... On Democracy

Dialing the South is an adventure in exploring citizen-opinion. There is a great modern wilderness of opinion through which few trails have been made. In the old days we were content to know what our neighbor thought, or what the boys gathered about the stove in the old store thought;—a kind of covered wagon method of disseminating opinion. Today we are content to know what the radio commentators think or the boys gathered around the air-conditioning vent in a New York office think. The air-ways method. The trouble about the radio is that we need two-way sets, and many more stations. And so N.G.R., though small and of low wattage offers those who tune in the privilege of calling back. . . .

For our winter issue (which goes to press December 15th) we are asking you how the policy of drafting men (used by our nation for the first time in the World War) to fight a war on foreign shores, fits into your conception of democracy? If you can harmonize draft with democracy, then on what basis would you choose the men to fight such a war? If we as a people could again convince ourselves that we should fight another war on foreign land, whom would we send? General Chiang Kai-shek has urged the college students of China to stay in college and not enlist, though China's shores have been invaded. Is he a fool or a wise man? [Original note.]

TUNING IN: H. W. O., sociologist, Chapel Hill, N. C. "It has been customary to characterize democracy . . . in two ways. The one is democracy as a philosophy, ideal, or concept, and the other is democracy as a form of government. Both of these are essential; yet there is a tendency in both to set up democracy

as an end instead of a means. . . . There is a third and more important meaning of democracy, and that is a *societal arrangement* as a means for conserving, developing, strengthening and giving representation continuously to the basic units which go into the making of society and civilization. . . . This point of view asks the question of any type of government: What will it do for mankind in the long run? what provisions for the continuing evolution and growth of the individual? and what guarantees of the total human welfare in the old sense of the Giddings' ideal of a superior mankind in a more adequate society?"

M. O. B., *health director, Chicago, Ill.* "Real democracy is based on a representative type of government in which all citizens participate fully. Anything which bars their participation is undemocratic. Present-day Nazi patterns (an opposite of democracy), especially as applied to racial discrimination, have existed in the South since the 1870's. We cannot have a complete democracy unless all citizens vote. The Negro should be given his vote, or representation in our national congress should be reduced in accordance with the actual voting strength of the South. Education is fundamental to an approach to democracy, and equal opportunities for it should be extended to Negroes and all other citizens. The real test of democracy is based on how it treats the humblest citizens within its realm."

R. L. F., *insurance, Atlanta, Ga.* "It seems to me that (our) democracy is hindered economically by the tenant farmer problem and our one-crop economy; politically, we have hundreds of thousands of unrepresented Negroes, other hordes disfranchised by the poll tax and, on those who do vote, tremendous political influence is brought by large corporations in their own interest."

A. F. D., *editor, Gainesville, Ga.* "Democracy, as practised in this sorry era, is a raucous cymbal played upon by politicians to herd gullible voters to the polls. Once the vote is got, democracy is shelved until the next campaign and there begins instead a system of squandering money so that the incumbents may rest assured of reelection. The only salvation of the original democracy, as promulgated by the founding fathers, lies in the inherent common sense of the American people."

L. P., *university faculty, New Haven, Conn.* "Democracy seems

to me to be the golden mean between paternalism and social irresponsibility; between autocracy and anarchy; between legalism and license; between social cohesion and individual variation; between collectivism and individual freedom; between social controls and civil liberties. It is not the geometrical mean . . . at a given moment it may lie nearer to one extreme than the other, the test always being, I think, equality of opportunity. . . . Democracy can never be a static structure of economic, political, or social relationships; by its very nature it is opposed to a frozen social system."

R. F. B., *sociologist, Tallahassee, Fla.* ". . . Politically, it would mean that the 'people' would have final and complete control of all political issues. . . . Socially, democracy would mean the absence of all classes based on such artificial criteria as birth and property. . . . One race would have just as good schools as the other—but not necessarily the same schools. A member of one race would have just as good a train or bus or waiting room as a member of any other race—but they would not necessarily travel or wait or eat together. Certainly they would not be together if they preferred not to."

M. D. S., *librarian, Tuskegee Institute, Ala.* "I feel that democracy means the literal adherence to the legal provisions of the Constitution of a democratic government and safeguarding under any and all circumstances the fundamental rights such as freedom of speech, of the press, of religious observances, etc. I think that it means equality of opportunity for all of the citizens of that democracy, regardless of regional mores and traditions."

B. E. B., *weekly magazine, New York City.* "Wars and the consequences of war—hate, suppression, poverty—are a natural part of the jumble of Europe. Our ancestors came here to be rid of all this. . . . American democracy meant to them an opportunity to build a life in which Jew and Gentile, German and Pole, could get along together without war, each contributing his peculiar genius to the whole. . . . After the World War we realized that we couldn't bring peace to Europe; we realize more than ever that democracy means the protection, here, of the peace and harmony our people left Europe to achieve."

S. R. T., *university faculty member, Columbus, Ohio.* "American democracy is largely a feeling, rather than a form of govern-

ment, a feeling based on the conviction that through the intelligence of the majority of the people, in whom the supreme power is vested, the most advantages will be returned both to the individual and to the masses. The effort is continually being made to translate this feeling into an existing form of government. . . ."

A. J. G., *student-editor, Chapel Hill, N. C.* "Democracy is not a blanket label applicable to all forms of government diametrically opposed to fascism, nor yet is it government of, by, and for the whole people where powerful minorities are allowed to control and exploit the voice of the masses."

U. S. B., *university faculty member, Charlotte, N. C.* "To our present notion we should add that a democracy is a governmental organization in which each individual is required to bear the country's responsibility and is permitted to participate in its rewards to the extent commensurate with his ability. Obviously, ability is not confined to any group. Here we have much to do."

R. E. C., *university president, Atlanta, Ga.* "To me a democracy is a place where every man and woman of every race and creed has the obligation of intelligent participation in the political life of the nation, and also has the opportunity of working out for himself or herself a satisfying career."

F. A. S., *county ordinary, Rabun County, Ga.* "Democracy is a belief in the potential worth of every human being . . . (a belief that) no form of oppression, whether social, religious, political, or economic, should be allowed so to constrict this person as to prevent the fulfillment of his own individual potentialities. . . . We have paid lip-service to democracy in this country but have never taken the trouble to fit ourselves for it and really make it work."

C. W. D., *business executive, St. Louis, Mo.* ". . . Democracy means the privilege of any race or creed to live their lives as they see fit, so long as their privileges do not impose restrictions on others. Under any idea of democracy the citizens as a whole may see fit to impose upon themselves as rigid restrictions as can be found in any totalitarian state, but they must be perfectly free to remove these restrictions by exercising the same power as was exercised in bringing the restrictions into being."

D. H. B., *dean, University, Miss.* "Simply and tritely no brief

statement expresses my idea better than 'of the people, for the people, and by the people.' . . . Your dilemma is between representative government and mass democracy, with its primary, referendum, and potential—in some states, actual—recall. . . . Surely, representative government is incomparably wiser in theory than government by mass democracy." [Fall 1939]

✻ Democracy and the South

Our recent college contest on *How Can the South Achieve a Real Democracy* brought in some interesting manuscripts. If the local stock-taking and loin-girding indicated are not made abortive by wholesale shifting of focus to the trans-Atlantic maelstrom, the region has cause for hope.

The average quality of the essays received was in no way disappointing to the editors. But we looked in vain for that one paper which would combine the grasp of facts, the good-will, the courage that were evident in most of those submitted, with the less tangible but no less rare qualities that characterize the artist. We were disappointed, too, that the total number of entries fell below the usual response to our contests.

Because several of the essays are of about equal quality, and none of them seems fitted for complete reproduction here, we are quoting briefly from several of the papers, and are dividing the prize among those from whom we quote—a major portion of it going to *Billy Geeslin* of Mercer and *Miriam Camp* of G. S. C. W.

Most of these young writers have drawn heavily from Odum's *Southern Regions* and other recent publications of similar content for their facts. Which is as it should be. And because readers of the *Review* have access to these facts elsewhere, we are not quoting those portions of the essays that directly employ them; feeling that you will be more interested in the way our college students are reacting to these facts than in their recapitulation of the facts themselves:

Billy Geeslin, Mercer University, Macon, Ga.: "... Do we have a democracy as visualized by the men who shed their noble blood for the right of every individual to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'? . . . Is it democratic to deny equal educational opportunity to all regardless of class, color or creed? . . . Is it democratic to condemn a man to a miserable existence because his skin is darker than our own? . . . Does democracy imply

selfish concentration of the bulk of the nation's wealth? . . . It is an axiom that ignorance and poverty are running mates. Where one is found, the other is not far distant . . . We are quick to assail Fuehrer Hitler for his 'blood purge' tactics when all the while we give the Negro a shove down the social ladder at every opportunity . . .

"The economic scene in the South is not much to look at—unless one is searching for a task which will require the unceasing and prolonged efforts of a sizable group of young men and women imbued with a love and loyalty for Dixie . . . Saddest note in the entire situation is that in the 1920's, the (southern) states lost about 1,700,000 persons through migration—about half of them between the ages of 15 and 35. They moved at the beginning of their productive life to regions which got this manpower free of charge, whereas the South, which had borne the expense of their care and education up to the time of departure, suffered an almost complete loss of her investment . . . But it is not the \$250,000,000 financial loss that is most disheartening. What hurts most is that these educated and active young men and women chose the easy way out. . . .

"If we are to achieve real democracy in the South, economic unbalance must be righted, equal educational opportunities provided for all, and racial discrimination must be rooted out."

Miriam Camp, Georgia State College for Women, Milledgeville, Ga.: "Before we achieve democracy, let us try to define it. 'Democracy is bread.' That is what the worker—whether he be of the land or the factory, would say . . . 'Democracy is government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' Thus chants the sixth grade history pupil . . . 'Democracy is a form of social organization in which the participation of each individual in various phases of group activities is free from such artificial restrictions as are not indispensable to the most efficient function of the group, and in which group policy is ultimately determined by the will of the whole society' . . . is the definition as the academician would have it . . . One might say that democracy is a society in which the system of government is continually being adapted to the needs of its members. . . .

"Democracy is being challenged in the South . . . 800,000 croppers shackled to sterile land, lift haunting eyes asking at least a

chance from a government, from an economic order, that grants it not . . . Other thousands, slaving their youth and their years away in a manufacturing system, look up and ask, 'Give us bread, but give us some roses too'. . . . We say it again: Democracy in the South is being challenged. The chief enemy is waste: . . . wasted land . . . wasted men . . . wasted money . . . wasted leisure . . . (But) waste is remediable. Intelligence is our main weapon in combatting our problems. The most encouraging thing about the South today is our capacity for self-examination.

" . . . The basic problem seems to be to get down deep enough in democracy to make it serve where the hungry are."

Margaret L. Coit, *The Woman's College of the University of N. C., Greensboro, N. C.*: "The tenant farm problem is the greatest threat to democracy in the South. A minority group, living in misery, working land it can never own, is fertile soil for the seeds of the demagogue, who has several times appeared in southern politics, and whose views are a variation of Fascism."

Clara Louise Gaillard, *Spelman College, Atlanta, Ga.*: "Can there be a democracy where not all the people are able, for many and varied reasons, to vote and thus govern themselves? . . . where many of the citizens are forced to go to the 'back door'? . . . where, if people express their frank opinions with regard to many of the important questions, they are liable to be put in jail or to lose their jobs? . . . where share-cropping in many forms and the peonage system exist? . . . where there is disregard for human personality to the extent that mobs shamelessly lynch people?"

"A true democracy will not come of a sudden; it will be a gradual process. It will be brought about by the correction of the above problems, by improving the soil . . . by getting rid of the one-crop system . . . by helping tenant farmers to secure land of their own . . . by raising the standards of living . . . by more education . . . by teaching people the importance of the ballot . . . by doing away with the one-party system . . . by teaching men the real value of personality . . . a true democracy will come in the South when people think democracy, teach it, and live it."

Kathryn Holman, *The Woman's College of the U. of N. C., Greensboro, N. C.*: "The trouble with the present Democratic leadership of the South is that it professes the same love of humanity and of the plain people as was manifested by Thomas

Jefferson without being at heart in sympathy with the things he stood for. The attitude of many of our southern party leaders is intensely conservative. Instead of giving intelligent expression to the needs of the people, they have been opposed to any change . . . A poll tax receipt is a voting requirement in several southern states. . . . The poor are required to fight for their country, and in many ways they bear a share of the burdens of taxation, why not give them a share in saying how this money shall be spent? Since the foundation upon which democracy rests is faith in the moral instincts of the average citizen, why not give every intelligent man and woman an equal voice in the settlement of problems of vital concern to each and every one of them?" [Summer 1940]

✿ Youth Answers Back

Among the battles set going in America by the conflict overseas, none is more gruesome than that between the generations. Ever since MacLeish's diatribe, the intellectuals above draft age have continued to close in on the intellectuals in their twenties, displaying an affinity for refined bullying and an aptitude for screw-turning which one had not, in more placid years, suspected them of possessing. There is no pressure harder to stand up under—nor easier to apply—than the imputation of moral obliquity, particularly when it is made by those occupying positions of respect in the eyes of the world, against those not yet adept in the art of self-defense.

The schism seems not to be based solely on age, however. As Lee Wiggins points out below, those young men who are not given to analysis are as easy prey to battle-cries as the most blood-thirsty could wish; whereas the older people to whom phrases are neither vocation nor avocation (and whose business does not stand to profit by war) have been perceptibly sluggish in giving allegiance to the Crusade.

We have asked certain young men and women in our southern colleges whose minds do not goose-step comfortably to write us what they think. Below are extracts from their letters:

"... I am not a pacifist. Furthermore, I believe that there is a definite Fascist threat from abroad if England loses this war, and that is one reason why I want this country to aid Britain short of war. But, while I am convinced we can and will meet this external threat, I am very pessimistic about our chances of dealing with what is the more serious threat of Fascism—the danger from within. Most southern college boys, in a crisis in which one's fundamental allegiance was tested, would take the easiest way out, which would be some form of Fascism. But this is true not only of youth, but of our elders. The reason why we would turn to Fascism to solve our problems, which are becoming increas-

ingly more serious in spite of the camouflage given them by defense activity, would not be that we lack the *will* to solve them, but that we lack the *intelligence* to solve them. I think all these people who are telling us that youth has no spine, no beliefs, nothing he will stand up for, are missing the point completely. Their remarks show that they know nothing whatsoever from actual contact with young people. As a matter of fact, I am convinced that young people today not only have beliefs, but are willing to spend more blood and lives to defend them than any generation in recent history. To me the greatest danger is not that young people will not die for what they believe, *but that they will die entirely too readily*. I have told these boys here at Carolina, who are eager to be up and at 'em to defend America, that a man who dies to achieve something is a brave man, but a man who dies and achieves nothing is a sucker. And I say to them, if the democratic way of life is worth dying for, it is worth living for. But those who are most eager to die are boys who never read a book, who never analyze our problems, who have no interest whatsoever in what is happening in the world until they are told that our "way of life" is in danger and that we must fight. Yes, these boys are willing to fight—but they don't know exactly what they're fighting for. That's where MacLeish and the critics miss the boat. They attack youth for a lack of spine. They *should* attack youth for a lack of intelligence, a lack of directed effort to understand our problems and find ways to meet them. The failure of youth, as I see it, is also the failure of America—and that is the failure to bring practice and theory together—to bring intelligence into play in order to give sound direction to their undoubted will and courage."—Lee Wiggins, U. of N. C.

"As a draftee with an order number that seems to indicate that I will be called up by the end of the first year, I do not look forward to the experience with any particular relish. I am content with the draft, however, for it seems to me to be the only fair way to answer the public's clamor for a huge army.

". . . 'Who is going to get what out of it' is still a foremost mental attitude, but along with it is a belief that fighting Hitler is fighting for freedom, even though the average conception of freedom may be badly distorted.

If the skeptical present generation is led into a moral crusade such as a war with Germany would be, and then disillusioned in the fashion of the post-World War, it is hard to see how the American democratic tradition can survive in it."—Frank Smith, U. of Miss.

"With the Negro youth of America it is a question of fighting to be allowed to fight. For the members of this group who are qualified want to enter all the divisions of the nation's arms. They want to serve where they are best qualified and where they can serve to the nation's best advantage. Negro youth is pledged to see that the spirit of the federal statutes is carried out and that no qualified person is barred from any department of the nation's armed forces because of color.

Prompt and obedient registration indicates the Negro's willingness to serve his country in this hour of stress. His records in educational and vocational institutions and in the nation's industries give support to his claims of qualification in many instances. So there remains only the carrying out of the pledge 'to fight to be allowed to fight in the armed forces of the American Government.' "—Arthur A. Winfield, Jr., Atlanta University.

"Is it right to forbid the Communist Party a place on the electoral ballot in many states on the basis that it threatens our form of government? Is it wise to develop this high sensitivity to 'fifth columnist' and 'sabotage,' this jittery vigilance which breeds mistrust and fear within ourselves? Is this so-called United Front worth the sacrifice of free thought and free expression, worth the hissing and booing of the little fellow, worth the blind accusations which an ignorant mob flings at Charles Lindbergh, an American citizen? Can we afford to think with our emotions and not with our minds in this world of today?

It is youth which realizes that we must fight dictatorship, not with dictatorship, but with democracy. It is youth which refuses to hide behind the glib sayings of 'our traditions will save us,' 'we did it in the last war' and 'look at England.'

Traditions are falling fast in 1941. The third term, one of our most 'sacred,' collapsed in November. Ten years ago we would not have dreamed of forbidding any party the right of representation on a democratic ballot.

Yes, we gave up things in the last war and we got them back. That was over twenty years ago . . . this is another world . . . another war . . . we must be more careful what we surrender.

And look at England. She did away completely with elections this year. Ambassador Kennedy brings home the news that democracy in England is doomed.

It is youth which says to America:

'A form of government which cannot stand up under the severest test, which is forced to backtrack on its principles in an attempt to preserve them, which blindly adopts the theories of the enemy it is fighting . . . this form of government is not worth preserving.'

It is youth which really believes in democracy."—Virginia Van der Veer, Birmingham-Southern.

"We are not a lazy, spineless generation. We don't want to be given anything. But we do ask for and demand one thing—that is, the right to work, to earn a decent living, to be able to have a home of our own, to get a good education, to fit ourselves for professions and skilled trades, to exchange a Saturday night paycheck for peace and security.

Nor is youth disloyal. In fact, youth wants more democracy, not less, and is willing to fight for it. But none of us are willing to fight an aggressive war to save British and American imperialism, to barter our lives with profits for a handful of capitalists. Youth asked for and wants no part of this war.

Instead, we think that the best way to preserve democracy is by first having one to preserve and by making it available to all people. We believe in the extension of social welfare and call for the continuation of WPA, NYA, Social Security, Old-Age Pensions and Unemployment Compensation as one of the best ways to defend and build democracy. The majority of young people want to see more federal provision toward higher educational, housing and health facilities for the American people, the people who want and will receive no profits from war. We would give the franchise to 12,000,000 citizens who are barred from voting in eight southern states by the poll tax."—Pauline Thomas, Birmingham-Southern.

". . . Democracy, as we see it, allows for differences of opinion. Should older generations, who taught us this, be hurt, angry or

scornful if we believe it? Should they be surprised if we, seeing what they have brought the world to, choose to seek new ways to remedy the situation? We, too, feel the world's worries as our own, and we know that we must seek a solution even as past generations have sought it. We wish to find our solution in a truer democracy than any past generation in America has ever seen. Those who have the advantage over us in years have taught us by their failure that we cannot, must not, *blindly* follow them. We have no wish to discard their contributions, but we find—a dismaying disillusionment—that they are far from adequate. So we gather up our courage and seek in our own ways a plan for reaching toward our ideal way of living.

As a young American Negro, member of a group within my generation, sometimes I feel like saying "Let America go her own way into hopeless failure and social destruction!" And yet, we young Negroes cannot quite give up hope; for we, too, are Americans, and we have no desire to sit by and see America sink without making an effort to save her. We only wish to be given the opportunity to do our part. In this desperate world situation, we think perhaps to find a place where we can step in and take our right to plan and work and share the benefits of our struggle for democracy.

I believe that we are, of necessity, the most courageous and most idealistic group of young people in the country. For we must struggle on toward our goal even when others do not wish our aid nor see its values or its potentialities for America's future. Yet, in doing that, we only do what Americans should do."—Bessie A. Cobb, Atlanta University.

"In this present crisis, how is youth failing to do its part? I readily admit that we do think twice before we stage demonstrations against Germany. We are not the leaders in the flag-waving campaign; the grown-ups have stolen the show in that respect. We don't have so much sympathy for England. We do not believe America should send soldiers to Europe. We do not believe England is fighting for any ideal nobler than that of self-preservation, or that she is considering the welfare of the United States. It is hard for us to conceive of Germany crossing the Atlantic Ocean to invade America when she cannot even cross the English Channel. We do question the strategical wisdom of spending millions of

dollars for training draftees as infantrymen instead of using that money to more advantage by building airplanes and tanks. We do wonder just how far short of war our aid to Britain is going to be. We hesitate to believe promises by statesmen that our soldiers will never be sent to Europe; such pledges were broken before. We wonder how different the attitude of our elders would be if they were the ones who will have to go. And we do have our doubts about this theory of winning a war by going over there and beating the enemy before he has a chance to come over here.

If this is unpatriotic, then youth pleads guilty to the charge. Rather I would say that this is sensible application of a lesson learned twenty years ago. This application, I feel, is the one less likely to lead America to disaster."—Tom Hammond, U. of Miss.

"I just wonder what's going to happen—are we ever going to have security and happiness, or shall our lives always be as vague and empty as clouds, drifting close to each other for a minute—separating for an eternity? When I hear the younger generation blasted to bits and condemned to hell, I often wonder if those who do the condemning have a right to open their mouths? Older people who have lived a score or so of years longer than we can show us the way—a little. If only they could remember that they, too, were once young and impatient! We cannot wait forever for security or life or our little meager happiness. We must have it now, or some hearts will erupt—some minds will break.

Frankly, I believe that out of my generation will come great things—books, music, art and living—if we don't wear ourselves out striving to break down an insurmountable barrier. We have so much to build on—there has been much greatness through the centuries—so many books to read—so many people to meet and know. But all these necessary things must be left undone until we settle the damnable conflict of selfish fiends, recuperate from that, and then once more seek the path to security."—Charlotte Kelly, Birmingham.

"In the democratic nation it is inevitable that youth should become vocal. Young people are given the ballot, and are thus admitted into the presence of the nation's creators. They are given education, and are thus admitted into the presence of the thought and knowledge of all times. It would be a reflection, therefore, on young people to expect them to remain unconcerned with the

progress of their nation and inactive in its councils. It is an active and a concerned youth, then, that democracy creates. In no other form of government is this possible. It is a silenced and regimented youth that is today fighting the totalitarian war. Our first thought always should be to keep youth free."—Robert Holland, U. of Miss. [Winter 1940–41]

✿ How Can Intelligent Southerners Best Help Their South?

At various times in the past two years we have asked this question of some of our most intelligent southerners. We now quote extracts from their replies, in the not too irrational hope that the region which leads the nation in eagerness to die overseas in defense of our "way of life" may at the same time feel a quickened interest in making its ideals a reality for all American citizens. [Original note.]

W. W. ALEXANDER, Vice-President Rosenwald Fund, Consultant on Minority Groups, OPM: "By being more intelligent and by efforts to work out their southern problems in a national framework of politics and economics that will offer help to the whole nation. By helping the poor people in the South in their political and economic development."

HOWARD ODUM, author *Southern Regions*: "The understanding of one region with its backgrounds, limitations, and prospects can be attained only through a sort of science of the region, which may be likened unto a gestalt, in which all factors are sought out and interpreted in their proper perspective. That is, each part is not only related to every part, but also planning for one aspect cannot successfully be done without adequate consideration of all aspects . . . It is not only not possible for one region to develop without cooperation of the other regions and of the Federal Government, but also only through strong regional development may the nation as a whole be enriched . . . Regionalism becomes the tool for decentralization, the buffer between federal and state conflict, and if there is any way to prevent totalitarianism in a great complex, urban, and industrial civilization of standardized tendency and to retain a quality civilization in a quantity world, it is through regionalism that it must be effected."

MARK ETHRIDGE, Vice-President and General Manager, *The Courier-Journal* and *Louisville Times*: "That's a poser. First, I think, by finding out something about it and by really being themselves if they are intelligent. Quit playing Old Massa and Ole Missis (the South is the greatest stage in the world's history). We got into most of the trouble we are in now because intelligence abdicated in favor of sentiment or immediate economics. There is no way out of it if we stick to sentiment; if we are not ready to abandon every preconceived notion or prejudice, or at least re-examine it. Leadership is crystallizing, intelligent people can help the crystallization by creating the ferment."

ARTHUR RAPER, Social Science Analyst with U. S. Department of Agriculture, Greensboro, Ga.; author, with Ira Reid, of *Sharecroppers All*: "By ridding themselves of stifling caste and class definitions. By developing human resources the better to conserve physical resources. By working out programs by which the resources of America may be made available to the children of the nation."

HENRY R. SIMS, State Senator, S. C.: "Long ago I concluded that human welfare and happiness are superior to traditions, customs and even property rights. I think the State is inadequately meeting many of its responsibilities to its people and by such failure is neglecting the future . . . One way to make this world better is by seeing to it that every child is wellborn and has every opportunity for development that health, good environment and education can give it . . . An important part of this is the economic phase . . . I would be glad to see the State take over ownership and operation of certain public utilities (as means of financing the increasing social services it should assume)."

LUCY RANDOLPH MASON, Public Relations Representative, TWOC, CIO: "First by understanding its problems. Few of us do this. We need to look at the South realistically, with awareness of its deficiencies and faults, as well as its opportunities and virtues. We need to build our program to correct our mistakes and make the most of our opportunities. One of the most urgent necessities is to recognize to the point of action the waste of human

and natural resources in the South . . . Federal cooperation and aid is essential to any plan for southern progress . . . We need genuine democracy in the South. This means political and economic democracy . . . Labor unions are also essential to political democracy and are among the greatest defenses against any form of dictatorship."

EVELYN SCOTT, novelist: "By confronting the race problem benevolently and realistically; by cultural action in respect to building traditions of their own, saving what is best from (the old); by acting in respect to the economically underprivileged in a way to relieve social injustice while never failing to keep in mind that the individual is to be the beneficiary, and that civilization cannot advance with the destruction of individual personality regardless of the advances in physical comfort which may accompany such destruction."

STERLING BROWN, author *The Negro in American Fiction*: "Basically, economic improvement of all the underprivileged must be sought for, and the Negro's just economic demands must not be shunted aside . . . White people must become more social minded; they must pay more than lip-service to democracy. Their stereotypes of the Negro should be examined in the sunlight of the present, not in the haze of the 'plantation tradition.' Not only should flagrant abuses—education inequalities, economic discrimination, injustice in the courts, peonage, lynching—be abolished, but also the petty insults, aggravations and denials that are multiplied by the entire Jim Crow arrangement in American life. Enlightened whites should not be frightened off from correcting of patent abuses by the hoodoo of social equality. Americans, white and Negro, need to multiply their men of good will, social vision and grit."

P. H. EASOM, Mississippi State Agent of Negro Education: "I was born on a little 160 acre, poor, sandy hill farm in the central part of Mississippi. As a child on this farm, I had some conception of the dire need of the great mass of people of my state who were situated as I was, with poverty, ignorance, superstition, lack of opportunity, inferiority complex, etc., as daily ex-

periences. I resolved then and there, if ever an opportunity offered, to try to help improve the lot of such people. I have never forgotten that resolution. I have been working to that end all my life and shall continue to do so . . . If I have made any contribution at all toward education in Mississippi, it has been in the direction of making our education function in the lives of the masses of the people. My philosophy of education is that we must start where we are with the problems as we find them, adapt our education to meet our needs and move forward from there."

H. C. NIXON, author *Forty Acres and Steel Mules*: "By telling the truth about the South, working for Federal aid for education, and insisting upon as well as practicing a square deal for Negroes and hillbillies, who are biologically capable and will make good if given a chance, a chance in time."

GLENN W. RAINEY, Georgia Tech faculty member: "By being constructively critical; by working for racial adjustments; by fighting for Federal aid to the South; by encouraging constructive labor organization; by fighting for general public education; by cooperating with the forces that are seeking solutions for the great national problems of economic maladjustment; by staying in the South or holding up their end when they leave the South; by striving against the inadequacies of our government and our government services; by insisting on the growing obligations of government as a controlling responsible agent of society."

DuBOSE HEYWARD, novelist: "By trying to be intelligent. By finding what the world is like beyond regional borders." (This reply was received some months before Mr. Heyward's death in 1940.)

DEVEREAUX McCLATCHEY, Member Atlanta Board of Education: "I believe that the South could be most benefited along all lines by raising the educational level of the whole southern population, especially of the Negroes. Economic prosperity of a region in the long run is proportional to the standard of education prevailing in that region. I believe that anything individuals can do toward this end, including effective advocacy of Federal aid to

education, will be an intelligent approach to the problem of helping the South."

WALTER WHITE, Secretary NAACP: "Intelligent southerners can best help their South by breaking the shackles of sectionalism. If an intelligent person could at the same time harbor racial prejudice, which I doubt, he could see the problems of the South from the point of view of enlightened selfishness, although he might not be interested in or sympathetic with racial and economic minorities like the Negro, sharecroppers, and cotton mill workers. From this vantage point he would see the infinite harm that arises, for example, out of disfranchisement which leads to the South's continuing to elect as its rulers and spokesmen mountebanks like Gene Talmadge, Bilbo, Gene Cox, and other third and fourth raters instead of top-flight southerners.

As a southerner, I am almost constantly shamed by the bad manners, selfishness, provincialism and downright stupidity which so many of the southern congressmen and senators exhibit in Washington.

Intelligent southerners would also repudiate the false economic doctrine that, first, it costs less to live in the South and, second, that it is to the economic advantage of the South to permit and fight for the continuation of lower wage scales bolstered up by lynching, the Ku Klux Klan, racial arrogance, fantastic and unfounded sectional pride in a past which never existed—in brief, all of the ingredients of fascism and Hitlerism which came into being long before Mussolini or Hitler was born.

In other words, the South, and particularly the white South, needs a new emancipation proclamation to free our people from an arrested juvenility of mind and outlook which is the basis of all the specific evils which cause the South rightly to be termed the nation's number one economic problem." [Winter 1941]

✿ Do You Know Your South?

Contest Announcement

\$250.00 in cash, or \$300.00 in books (these to be selected by winner) will be given to the *North Georgia Review* reader who answers accurately and most adequately its *One Hundred Questions about the South*.

Do you know its needs and its opportunities?

Do you know its books and its writers?

Do you know its great fortunes, who possess them, how they were made?

Do you know its business, its political leaders and their opinions about social and economic and political problems?

Do you know its churches and their programs?

Do you know its schools and their aims?

Do you know its mores? its folk songs, its dances, its crafts?

Do you know its swamps and its mountains?

Could you draw a spot map of its crime centers? Of its disease centers?

Do you know its music, its food, its superstitions?

Do you know "the Negro," "the tenant-farmer," "the textile laborer," "the mine worker," how he lives, and where, what education he has, what cash income, what play facilities, what kind of health?

Do you know its sports, its parks, its resorts?

Do you know its peaches-and-cream complexion, and its warts?

DO YOU?

Somewhere within the pages of the four issues of the *North Georgia Review* beginning with this current number are the answers to One Hundred Questions. Our most "careful reader" will be rewarded not only with \$250.00 in cash (or \$300.00 worth of books) but with we hope, a clearer, more ample knowledge and understanding of the land which we all love, defend so hotly and, most of us, know so little about.

(For details of contest, write the editors of *The North Georgia Review*). [Fall 1939]

Across the South Today

[by Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling]

In this issue of the magazine we look at our South.

We were born here, our parents and grandparents were born here, our great-grandparents were born here. It is our home, and the home of thirty million other southerners, nine million of whom are Negro, sixteen million of whom are undernourished, twelve million of whom live in shanties, one-half million of whom have no house to live in, eight million of whom own only the garments they wear, twenty-five million of whom do not vote, five million of whom are illiterate, twenty million of whom reach only the fourth grade in school.

These are our people. It is of these people that our South is made. It is by these people that our culture is created and our democracy formed—a democracy that is no stronger than the men and women who compose it, a way of life that is no better than the way our people live it.

There was once a southern legend, a myth which bound the South, making a free people captive to a dead idea. We are only now coming out of bondage to that fantasy which had so little reality in it, yet to which we clung, believing it the truth. Is it possible as we begin to relinquish the old legend, that we are willing now to accept “democracy” as a substitute myth, hugging to us a hollow shell, content that there be no reality in it?

Only the future can answer that question. And the present is upon us.

It cannot be an irrelevant act in time of stress to turn away from a warring world and look now at our own land, assess its strength and its weakness, the reality of its democratic resources, the virtue of its people. For how the South goes, goes America. The South is more than a handful of states below Washington, a region of the richest land and poorest people, the Nation's Economic Problem Number One. It is a symbol of man's capacity to realize his dreams. It is democracy's test case. If economic and

racial democracy can come to the South with its bi-racial culture and colonial economy in context of a union of states, then there is just reason to hope for a world democracy. If it fails—if the most powerful democracy on earth fails to realize democratic ideals in its region of greatest need, then it is useless to hope for a successful union of nations in an international and democratic context.

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A year ago we asked the southern public, "Do you know your South?" We were challenged to answer our own questions. We hope in choosing this way to answer that we have succeeded in raising other and more relevant questions. For beneath the facts, the chilling and warming layers of sad, funny, beautiful, tragic, ugly southern facts which our social scientists have been urging us all to look at these last few years, are the people who made those facts and are being made by them. It is these people that we need to get acquainted with. We find ourselves now wanting to ask, "Do we southerners know *ourselves*?" [Winter 1941]

✻ Appendix A

Contemporary Comment

From "They Have Said about Us" [a column]

John Temple Graves, II, in "This Morning," the *Birmingham Age-Herald*: "*The North Georgia Review*, published at Clayton, Ga., has made of itself in its four years of life a widely accepted and attended magazine of southern regionalism." [Fall 1939]

The *Atlanta Journal*: "*The North Georgia Review* is published quarterly at Clayton, Ga., by Paula Snelling and Lillian E. Smith, whose brilliant work . . . has won for them the acclaim of writers and critics the nation over." [Fall 1939]

Editorial, the *Baltimore Evening Sun*: "It is a literary quarterly devoted to the southern regions; something of the spirit of that admirable but short-lived publication the *Richmond Reviewer* animates its pages." [Fall 1939]

Bernard DeVoto, in the *Saturday Review of Literature*: "Everything it has published has been worth anyone's time, and most of it has been well informed, to the point, and highly intelligent. It is the most interesting little magazine that comes to this desk and easily the most competent." [Fall 1939]

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in "My Day": "These young women are modern-minded but they have a fine taste in books and poetry. The articles which deal with other subjects are interesting, but somewhat surprising coming from a southern origin." [Fall 1939]

David Lilienthal, Vice Chairman Tennessee Valley Authority: ". . . there is more going on in the minds and spirit of the people in the South . . . than in any other section of the country. The evidence is all around us, and your little magazine . . . is an important addition to that evidence." [Winter 1939-40]

Roland Hayes, singer: "As a proud North Georgian, allow me

to congratulate you upon the gripping story-play of yours in *The North Georgia Review* . . . As the motive behind it—filtering through and over the rhythms of the '85' Nature drums—falls upon my consciousness, the God in me stands up—higher than I am—" [Winter 1939-40]

Howard W. Odum, sociologist, U. of N. C.: "I did enjoy 'So You're Seeing the South.'" [Spring 1940]

DuBose Heyward, novelist: "The few copies I have seen of your magazine have been rather amazing . . . I mean amazing in a splendid sense." [Spring 1940]

Ulysses G. Lee, Lincoln University, Pa.: "I have enjoyed each issue to the fullest. I was especially impressed with 'So You're Seeing the South' in your last issue. I hope that these restrained sketches will continue as promised If there is anything I can do to help your magazine along (besides talking about it constantly to my students of American literature and to my friends) please do not hesitate to ask me." [Spring 1940]

Caro Green Russell, in *The Literary Lantern*, syndicated column: "One characteristic of the *Review* is that it has a mind of its own, is not given to mass beliefs, and invariably has good ideas brilliantly expressed. . . . In the Spring number Lillian Smith writes sanely about our present fascination with war. . . . hers is the most outspoken statement against war fever over here that we have seen among the so-called 'respectable' periodicals." [Summer 1940]

Walter White, Secretary, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: ". . . I don't know what I would do if I didn't continue to read the *Review*." [Summer 1940]

Virginius Dabney, editorial, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*: "That highly original and definitely uninhibited magazine, the *North Georgia Review* . . . is more thought-provoking than usual in its current issue . . . devoted to an elaborate questionnaire on the

Contemporary Comment

South. . . . you will probably find your cerebrum set actively in motion. . . ." [Winter 1940-41]

Mrs. Phillip La Follette, Madison, Wis.: "It is heart-warming to find you doing such a sensitive, courageous and artistic work for the South." [Winter 1940-41]

Mary R. Beard, historian: "Your magazine has some superb qualities informational, interpretative, stylistic. . . . BUT I regret your assumptions respecting women of which your 'Man Born of Woman' in your Winter number smells to high heaven. In my opinion, those assumptions are not warranted by the actual history of women and are narrowly restricted to the feminist psychosis of the 19th century in America . . . I regard *unadulterated* feminism as one of the shallowest ideologies ever formulated. . . ." [Spring 1942]

Karl Menninger [psychiatrist]: "I think the last issue of the *Review* the best ever, and I am quoting extensively from 'Man Born of Woman' in my own forthcoming book [*Love against Hate*]." [Spring 1942]

Roscoe Dungee, editorial, *Oklahoma City Black Dispatch*: ". . . when a southern-born white woman feels the urge to tear the veil from hypocrisy and speak plainly to the inhabitants of Dixie, the *Black Dispatch* nominates such a courageous woman for the Hall of Fame." [Spring 1942]

Charles S. Johnson [Professor of Sociology, Fisk University]: ". . . has more sound and practical suggestions to the square inch than any article or book on race relations that has yet come to my attention." [Spring 1943]

Philip Randolph [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People]: ". . . like the flash of a white diamond upon the sands." [Spring 1943]

A. J. Muste [War Resisters League]: ". . . magnificent." [Spring 1943]

William H. Kilpatrick [Teachers College, Columbia University]: "I take off my hat to bravery." [Spring 1943]

Mary McLeod Bethune [founder of Bethune-Cookman College]: "I appreciate deeply the service you are rendering." [Spring 1943]

Pearl Buck [novelist]: "If there are people in the South able to think like this, it gives hope to the whole country and to people everywhere." [Spring 1943]

"I am one of the most admiring readers of *South Today* and I like the effort of that magazine to speak up for the psychological emancipation of women—and of men too—from the conventional mold into which they are crammed regardless of their individual temperaments, just as much as I like its plain honest admission of facts and plea for fair dealing between the two races."—a nationally famous woman writer and editor. [Winter 1944–45]

W. J. Cash devoted a column to *Pseudopodia* in the Charlotte, N. C., *News*, July 19, 1936: "A tiny magazine of which I have not heard before turns up on my desk this week. It is called *Pseudopodia*, measures 8x5, sells for 25 cents a copy or one dollar a year, is published quarterly at Clayton, Georgia, under the editorship of Paula Snelling and Lillian Smith, and has only now got to the second number of the first volume. . . . I trust the infant lives and thrives, for . . . it promises to be pleasant and sensible reading."

S. I. Hayakawa devoted his column "Second Thoughts" in the *Chicago Defender*, June 12, 1943, to *South Today*: "There is a gleam of light coming from the white South—a gleam of clean and dazzling light. And it comes from Clayton, Ga.—which to me is certainly an unlikely sounding place for a gleam of light to be coming from. It is a magazine called 'South Today' . . . and it contains the hardest hitting, most intelligent, and most courageous discussion of the problems of the South that I had ever seen."

✻ Appendix B

Notes on the Authors of Works in This Volume

JOHN D. ALLEN, journalist and college teacher, has retired from the faculty of East Tennessee State University and lives at Johnson City.

The late HENRY BABCOCK was church secretary of the Workers Defense League and prominent in the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

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(Abbreviations used in this Index: ST for *South Today*, L.E.S. for Lillian E. Smith, P.S. for Paula Snelling.)

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Lillian Smith and Paula Snelling were co-editors and major contributors. Other contributors included Louis Adamic, Sterling Brown, W. J. Cash, W. E. B. DuBois, Pauli Murray, Arthur Raper, Byron Herbert Reece, Ira DeA. Reid, Evelyn Scott, and James Still. The magazine featured essay contests and symposia through which the editors sampled and stimulated opinion and encouraged a sense of community among subscribers, who eventually numbered more than 10,000. Reprints of articles sold widely. The most popular was Lillian Smith's "There Are Things to Do" from the Winter 1942-43 number of *South Today*, of which 250,000 copies were distributed.

The magazine ceased publication at the height of its influence and circulation owing partly to the difficulty of obtaining office and editorial help, partly to a fire which destroyed the files in 1944, and partly to the demands on Lillian Smith's energies which resulted from the publication that same year of her best-selling novel *Strange Fruit*.

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